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A STATUE

(The Apostle)

By Emile Verhaeren

Within his gaze the star that was his soul . . . .
Through roads of rock that blaze and glow like coal
Toward the unknown so far had he progressed
That his gray century, coughing death, distressed
In wind too mighty with his thought and vision,
Had fiercely buried him beneath derision.

He was forgotten, while the years piled high
Their ladder toward the future's sky,
When, lo, one morn, the town burst forth with gold
And festival, his fame arriving,
And glorified him in a pose, reviving
His will, erect on pedestal of gold.

The granite of his glory sings in rhyme
The exile, hunger, dread, he bowed beneath
The prison-yoke; they braided like a wreath
Around his memory his ancient crime.

They took his thought and from it chiselled laws;
They took his madness, order from it sprung;
His one-time mockers wondered when the tongue
That hammered in his tocsin-voice would pause.

In bronze his image sanctifies the square,
Whence can be seen, with mystery huge and flaring,
His brow, supreme and vast, as though unsparing
In days of wrath and tumult everywhere.

Translated by Edward H. Pfeiffer.

IN THE CITY

A Drama in Four Acts

By SEMEN YUSHKEVICH

Translated from the Russian
by J. A. Posin, G. R. Noyes, *and* John Heard

CHARACTERS

Glank, *fifty*
Dina, *his wife, thirty-eight*
Sonya, *their daughter, twenty-one*
Eva, *their daughter, eighteen*
Grandfather, *Glank's father, slightly deaf*
Boym, *twenty-five, a self-educated teacher*
Arn, *twenty-five*
Ber, *forty-five*
Elka, *eighteen*
Mashki, *an old woman*

The action takes place in a large city.

ACT I

Roomy glass-windowed corridor, used as a dining room. On the right, a door into Boym's *room. On the left, two doors: one to the yard, the other to the dining room.* Sonya, *in street clothes, sits before a mirror and surveys herself. She sighs discontentedly. The room is cozy. A small cupboard, a table, chairs, a couch. The green window-shades are lowered in the right half of the corridor, so that* Sonya *cannot be seen from the outside. On the left, a double-casement window is open and through it is seen the building on the opposite side of the yard, and several trees. Early spring. A warm evening. A lamp burns on the table.* Dina *is standing by the open door, leading into the yard, and is talking to someone.*

Dina. I've asked you not to stand by the windows, Elka, but you won't listen. You're such a . . . If you want something, you may come in. Why are you peeping? What is it? You want Sonya? What for?

ELKA (*from the yard, timidly*). I wanted, Dina . . . only don't be angry with me . . . I wanted Sonya to come to my place for a . . . minute. Just one minute, that's really not much, is it?

SONYA (*proudly*). *I* go to *her* place? Never!

DINA (*relenting*). You see, Sonya doesn't want to. And why shouldn't you come here? Nobody's going to steal your good looks. No, no, nobody! And, if you wanted to, you might get some good advice.

ELKA. Well, all right, I'll come in.

SONYA (*in a low voice*). It would have been better if you hadn't invited her . . . much better!

(ELKA *comes in. She wears a light-colored dress. Her hair is arranged in a braid. She is bedecked with ribbons. She is very pretty.*)

ELKA. Here I am! Good evening, Dina! Good evening, Dina! Good evening, Sonya, my good Sonya! (*Bows to both of them.*) What a beautiful night! (*Silence.* ELKA *is embarrassed. She laughs harmoniously.*) What a beautiful evening! . . .

DINA. What are you laughing at? What if it is beautiful!

ELKA (*pleading*). Don't be angry with me! . . . I'm laughing, certainly, but who can tell why I'm laughing? Perhaps, I'd rather cry . . . Something is laughing in me, quite apart from myself, but my soul isn't in it. Here I stand and think: how good it would be to run away, to run away proudly . . . But I don't do it . . . So please don't be angry with me, I beg of you . . .

(SONYA *turns away and does not look at her.*)

DINA (*shrugging her shoulders*). In the neighborhood they're saying "Queer Elka!" I don't take anybody's word.

ELKA (*sadly*). Yes, they do say it! . . . "Queer Elka!" And, perhaps, it's true. And, perhaps, there's nobody else in the whole world, Dina; I just whirl around alone, and suffer so! . . .

DINA. Why?

ELKA. Who knows? "Queer Elka!" . . . Once, when we lived in a big street, men came and killed my father, but they didn't touch my blind grandmother. And now I have to

live with that same blind grandmother. You know the story? No? Oh, it is such a sad, dismal story!

DINA. Maybe you're telling tales; or you may have been dreaming?

ELKA (*pensively*). Who knows what a person may be dreaming? And isn't it all the same, Dina, whether the whole thing is a dream or the truth? (*She walks back and forth in the room, casting timid glances at* SONYA.)

DINA. Why do you keep walking? Sit down. You came to see Sonya . . . Well, here she is.

ELKA (*animated*). Yes! Yes! (*Her voice becomes extremely tender.*) Look here, Sonya, I've come to say "Good evening!" Good evening, my dear, good Sonya!

SONYA (*proudly*). I've answered you already. Well, what *did* you come for?

ELKA. Why won't you speak to me kindly? And here am I bubbling over with kindness. I'm growing bigger; I'm growing smaller . . .

DINA (*suddenly*). You *are* beautiful, Elka. Your beauty is simply amazing.

ELKA (*turns quickly*). Do you think so? And yet some people don't like it. One man doesn't like it. (*To* SONYA.) Dear Sonya, I've come to remind you . . . oh, just to remind you . . . Look here, Sonya; we've been friends . . . not very long, though.

SONYA. Leave me alone.

DINA (*impatiently.*) Say what you started to say and go away . . . if Sonya doesn't like it . . .

ELKA. Here, we've been friends! . . . (SONYA *again refuses to listen to her.*) And we both of us fell in love with Arn. (*Suddenly, to both.*) I beg you, Dina, and you, Sonya: give him to me. What do you want of him?

SONYA (*gloomily*). You can have him, Elka. I don't want him.

ELKA. You're angry, Sonya; but I'm afraid. Who knows what is in my heart? The heart fades like a flower! (*Sadly.*) The heart fades like a flower . . .

SONYA. I keep asking myself, why do you torment me? No matter where I meet you, no matter where you see me, you keep begging, begging all the time . . . As if *I* wanted him! I? (*With horror.*) *I?* I try to drive him away from

me. At this very moment I sit and tremble: in a minute he'll come in and he'll begin to beg me, too. Mother, turn your face away, turn it away immediately. I can't bear to look at your face.

DINA. Don't say such things, Sonya. Don't! . . .

ELKA. Dear Sonya, darling Sonya! Say to him, "Go to Elka!" Say to him, "There's a girl who loves the sun! There's a girl who'll pray to the sun!" Sonya, I see him every day, but I daren't come close to him. I follow him like a shadow, and beauty fills my very soul . . . and sadness too . . .

SONYA (*angrily*). Why tell me about it? Keep still, Elka!

DINA. You'd better go, Elka. Look what you've done. And she's angry with me, too! Go, Elka! We've got to live . . .

ELKA (*frightened*). There! Now you're shouting, too.

SONYA (*gloomily*). Go away, Elka, go away . . .

ELKA (*obediently*). I'm going. Where am I? I'm going. I've flown away! And what is in my soul, and what is in my heart? I've flown away! . . . (*Laughs long and harmoniously. Quietly goes out.* DINA *and* SONYA *do not look at her.*)

DINA. She's gone! She's queer! . . .

SONYA. She isn't queer . . . She's lovely, mother! I envy her.

(DINA *waves her hand contemptuously, goes to the window, and looks out into the yard. Silence.*)

SONYA (*looks in the mirror. Speaks in a monotonous voice.*) My eyes have gone bad already . . .

DINA (*wearily*). Again!

SONYA. My cheeks look old already. Each day takes something away. I can see it, and I tremble . . .

DINA. It takes something away from us all.

SONYA. But two months ago it was different. Mother, how can you look at me, how can you sit at the same table with me? With *me!* If *you* had been my daughter *I'd* have driven you out of the house. Have you seen me there? Do you feel my trembling when I sit there? . . . I'm still able to tremble! But the time will come when I shall even stop trembling . . .

DINA. I'm tired of listening to you, Sonya.

SONYA. Keep still, mother, keep still.

DINA (*indignant*). Why should I keep still? Is there anybody else in the house who'll take care of us? Your father's been out of a job for a year; everything is falling to pieces; everything is crumbling. *You* keep still! The stones are pressing down on us, the rocks are crushing us . . . Keep still, you! We used to sit in the dark in the evenings. You went out, and there came light. Worry had gone out of the house . . .

SONYA. And what about my soul?

DINA. What do I care about your soul? There's no such thing as a soul . . . We've got to live.

SONYA. And what about my love? I love Arn, mother. I'm dying with love for him! Now it's gone! . . . In the evenings, we used to sit together, the two of us, and dream. Lost!

DINA. That's not my affair.

SONYA (*in anger*). Then, what is? You're a stone!

DINA. We've got to live, Sonya. No one can stand between us and life. I stand here and I look around . . . I look! Do anything just to keep alive! There's not a single thing that people can refuse to do! Men steal, lie; men kill, rob; men and women sell themselves . . . Anything to keep alive! What is *love?* Nothing! What are tears? Nothing!

SONYA. All the year you've been tormenting me so. All the time you've been destroying, destroying . . . But Someone looks into my very soul, mother; looks reproachfully, shakes his head, and says: "It's wrong, it's wrong!" Someone, mother!

DINA. I don't care!

SONYA. You don't? You're not human!

DINA. Who is human? And what is it to be human?

SONYA. And all this time I've been struggling with you . . . You've subdued me. I walk the street and I feel love. My soul is being drawn to Arn, and I feel ashamed . . . I hear his kind voice. I sit there . . . and I tremble . . . tremble . . .

DINA. I don't care. (*Gloomily.*) Stay at home if you don't want . . .

Sonya. You say this now. But why didn't you say it before? Why didn't you say: "We may die, Sonya, but we'll keep our honor."

Dina. Die! (*Bursts out laughing.*) Let others die. We want to live. I want to live! I want to be able to breathe, to see . . . There's no sacrifice too big for the sake of life! Everything — anything — for the sake of life! Look around you. Life orders; people obey. Too bad, I didn't know that before. Married that good-for-nothing Glank. Bore children! Stood by the scales in the store to see that both pans balanced . . .

Sonya. If father should find out . . .

Dina. Who's going to tell him? And if he does find out, I'm going to talk to him, I am . . . My words will be like stones . . . I shall pile them on his head, I shall throw them under his feet . . . That good-for-nothing Glank will keep quiet. Put on your coat and go, Sonya. They're waiting for you there. What are you feeling sorry about? Whom are you afraid of, girl? Here at home there's poverty, dirt, misery! And you left our house, raised your head, and shouted, "Come on, all of you! The old, the young, the aged, and the children. I'm a virgin, but I want silks! I'm a virgin, and I want gold!" If only *I* were young! A virgin! You are the queen of the world!

Sonya (*sadly*). For a minute!

Dina. But you are a queen just the same! Quick! Put on your coat and go! They're waiting for you. Forget Arn. Push everybody out of your way and go. People will say: "There goes a girl who's not afraid of anybody." Everybody'll bow before you. They'll say: "Here comes a girl who's eager to live and who's going to take everything she can out of life."

Sonya (*enraptured*). I like that. That's how you turned my head. That's how I fell over the cliff, mother, with my eyes closed. I'm going now, mother. Oh yes, I'll smile, but there's death in my heart. I feel sorry for my lost youth, I feel sorry for my faded eyes, my withered cheeks. My lips tremble while they're being kissed . . .

Dina. Why do you torment me, Sonya? Mountains are being piled upon us; and we, the small and the weak, must bear them. Well, then, we *will* bear them, Sonya. Nobody

is going to scare us. As if we were the only ones in the world! Everybody is bearing a load. Your father'll come home and say to me, as he has been saying for a whole year now: "I haven't earned anything and there are no jobs!" We will give him tea to drink, and it'll be sweet; it'll be sacred, this tea! The daughter has earned it for the father, and the father doesn't know. Eva will come home . . . Eva will drink the tea . . . and won't know! And you and I, at night, looking into the darkness, will shake our fists at someone. We'll give away our dearest — yes — but we'll live, we'll live . . . !

SONYA. You say terrible things! You make me crazy! I'm like a plaything in your hands . . . (*Sighing.*) I'll go! . . . (*Rises and looks around. In the next room* BOYM *is tuning a violin.*)

DINA. Boym is getting ready to play . . . There's the man I'm afraid of! Why did I let him live with us? Does it do us any good to have Eva fall in love with him?

SONYA (*with an impatient gesture*). Eva! . . . Eva!

(EVA *comes in. She is an auburn-haired girl. Delicate coloring. Graceful figure, slender. A heavy braid. Takes off her hat and jacket. Apparently she is tired from fast walking. Sits down on the nearest chair.*)

DINA (*indifferently*). Well?

EVA. Too late. Another girl got the job.

DINA. I didn't count on Boym. I never had any confidence in him.

EVA (*displeased*). Boym *had* asked, and they *had* promised him this job for me. But Boym isn't to blame if they deceived him.

DINA. Your Boym isn't good for anything.

EVA. What can I do? (*Turns to* SONYA. *Surprised.*) Are you going out, Sonya?

SONYA. Yes, I am.

EVA. What, again! Again, Sonya! Every night you disappear.

SONYA. And I am going out tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, and next year. It's nobody's business.

EVA. I didn't say it was my business.

SONYA. Why do you talk, then?

EVA. I'll shut up . . . Mother, I'll tell *you!* . . .

SONYA. And don't say anything more. Never ask questions . . . Here, I've powdered myself. It's nobody's business!

DINA. Stop, Sonya.

EVA. I don't know why you should get angry. Do as you like! Listen, mother, I was walking along the street . . . The things I overheard and the things that were said to me! So many men on the streets . . .

DINA. I thought you were really going to tell us something! Men! Are they wild beasts?

SONYA (*gloomily*). They *are* wild beasts, mother. They *are!*

EVA (*to* SONYA). One of them took my hand, Sonya. A very tall man . . . good-looking too, I think. I trembled. Don't go out at night, Sonya. Please!

DINA (*laughing*). Well, what if he did take your hand and speak kindly . . . Aren't you beautiful, haven't you golden threads on your head instead of hair? . . .

SONYA (*sternly*). What are you trying to do, mother? (*Nods her head.*) Well, perhaps it's best that way. Perhaps that's our fate. Oh, Eva, Eva! (*Goes out quickly.*)

EVA (*frightened*). Why did she say that, mother? What does she mean?

DINA. Ask her. She's like that . . . Drops a word and then runs away. (*Raising the curtains.*) Sonya's gone; it seems as if it were brighter.

EVA. I don't see it.

DINA. Brighter. I say, brighter. (*Comes close to her. Happily.*) Eva, somewhere they're baking bread! For whom? For us! . . . Somewhere they're weaving cloth! For whom? For us! . . . Sonya has gone out, and if a man should come up to her and say . . .

EVA (*interrupting, pleadingly*). No, no, don't say that, mother! If only you knew what goes on in the street, you'd have tied us to yourself on a string and wouldn't let us out of your sight . . .

DINA. I know very well what I should have done. (*Goes into the room on the left and comes out carrying a samovar. Puts it on the table.*) I'd have said this, Eva: "Glory be to Him who created man and woman, and made the man love the woman."

EVA. Don't, mother! Don't . . .

DINA. Better get used to it. Who knows what'll happen to you next minute, next day? (*Gets the cups from the cupboard and sets them on the table.*)

EVA. You talk so. I don't understand! Are you my mother or are you holding a knife to my throat.

DINA. Take a good look.

EVA. When I talk to father or to Boym or to grandfather, I feel comfortable. I speak out and I'm not afraid. I can laugh! But when I'm with you I whisper and . . . I'm afraid.

DINA (*angrily*). Then show me your fortune! Show me your riches! . . . That father of yours who can turn stones to gold . . . !

EVA. That's enough, mother. I'll be quiet . . .

DINA (*sternly*). Drink your tea. It's your mother who got it for you: nobody else. It wasn't your father, nor you either! . . . It was your mother! It was I who got the sugar, too . . .

(*Both sit down at a table. They drink tea in silence.* ARN *passes by the open window and looks into the room.*)

DINA. Arn! He's coming in. I wish he were dead.

(*Annoyed, puts the cup on the table.* ARN *comes in.*)

ARN (*shaking* DINA'S *hand*). Good evening, Dina. (*Takes off his hat.*) How do you do, Eva.

DINA (*frowning*). Good evening. What's new, Arn?

EVA. How do you do, Arn. Have some tea?

ARN (*good-naturedly*). I just looked in the window, but I didn't see Sonya.

EVA. Sonya's gone out. Sit down, Arn.

DINA (*in the same voice as before*). What's new, Arn?

ARN. Oh, nothing! What can I say? Just nothing! (*Sits down.*) Sonya's out? What's she doing out at night? I don't understand!

DINA. That's her business!

ARN. But I'm worried; honest I am. I'm such a coward by nature, honest! I'm worried! . . .

EVA. Here's your tea, Arn. (*To* DINA.) I'll call Boym, mother, shall I?

DINA. Don't. When he wants to, he'll come.

EVA. He won't come. He's modest and he'll never ask.

I think I'll call grandfather, too. I can just see them sitting and thinking: "They'll call us to tea soon."

DINA (*frowning*). Don't call them.

(EVA *gets up and paces the room. Stops at* BOYM'S *door. Wants to enter but lacks courage. Looks back at her mother and paces again. Listens to the conversation.*)

ARN (*drinking his tea*). It's fine here, at your place; honest, Dina. So simple and quiet and clean! You can be at peace here. When I come home from the office I don't feel happy. Honest, a person can't get any rest in our place. Father keeps quarreling with mother; sister's always yelling about something; honest! It isn't quiet at our house. But here everything's peaceful and sweet.

DINA. It's bought with blood . . .

EVA. At your house, Arn? But where's it any better? Somebody is always yelling somewhere! Boym says they're yelling everywhere.

DINA. Boym says! A lot Boym understands!

ARN. I'm attached to you like a dog. Honest! I sit in the office, write, answer letters, and all the time I'm thinking, How long is it till evening? Then I'll go to see Sonya and I'll meet good, honest people. Clean, pure people. You know, Dina, your family is setting an example for the whole neighborhood. Honest! Who has such a home-life as Glank's? Quiet, proud people . . . The girls are a joy to everyone! But I just laugh to myself, Dina. One of the girls, you see, is my girl.

DINA. I don't understand you, Arn. Your girl? What do you mean by "yours"?

ARN. Don't ask me, Dina. That's our affair; honest it is.

DINA. I don't even want to hear about it.

ARN. Why? This is bad; honest. You know, I respect you, Dina. I think a lot of you. You're Sonya's mother . . . But what you just said isn't nice . . . I love Sonya . . .

DINA (*interrupting him*). And what will come of it? (*To* EVA.) Why are you hanging around his door? What do you want there? Sit down *here.*

EVA (*quickly moving away from the door*). Nothing! For no reason.

DINA. And you have no business standing there. Anyone'd think he amounted to something. Boym! Some man, Boym! Sit down here beside me. (*To* ARN.) What'll come of it?

ARN (*surprised*). Why do you ask, what'll happen? Honest . . .

DINA (*to* EVA). What's he talking about, Eva? (*To* ARN.) What did you say? You love Sonya? And who are *you?* A baron or a count? What have you got to brag about?

ARN. So that's it! I didn't know, honest! (*Embarrassed.*) Give me another cup of tea, Eva.

DINA. What was it you didn't know? Aren't you ashamed not to know? Did you think of your relatives? You've got a sister, and that sister of yours is always yelling? . . . Is that so?

EVA. Mother, mother! . . .

DINA. No, let him listen to me; I've listened to him. Eva, you don't know what kind of life they're leading in that house of theirs, but I do . . .

ARN. Don't talk about that, Dina; I know . . . But just think: who fell in love with me? Who? Sonya! Such a pure girl, such a proud girl! Honest, I'm going to beg her of you. I've never begged anything of anybody before, honest I haven't! Dina, dear Dina . . .

EVA. When I hear men talking that way . . .

DINA (*interrupting her. Sternly*). Keep still, Arn! What does life say? I'll tell you what to do, Arn: open the book of life and read it. Thumb its pages . . . Who doesn't want certain lips pressed against theirs, Arn, or that a certain road go straight and not uphill, or that each "yes" find its "yes," and each "no" its "no"? Who doesn't? But there's a book of life, Arn! And that book says that Sonya'll never be your wife.

ARN. You're crazy, honest! Sonya gave me her solemn promise. She gave me her solemn promise, Dina. . . .

EVA. It makes me suffer to hear a man talk that way. A man ought to speak differently. Arn, why should you ask mother? And tell your whole story? If you haven't found Sonya in, sit down and keep quiet. Drink your tea.

DINA. Even if I don't answer you this time, Arn, it doesn't change anything. When a righteous man refuses to

answer you, look out! See how pleasant it is in this room: there's a lamp burning, it's bright; the samovar hisses and sings merrily. Do you want it dark here? And dirty? And frightful? Go on away, Arn; I ask you this favor! Let's live in peace. Don't upset our lives. We have a heavy load to carry and we're climbing a mountain. Leave us alone; don't push us down! . . .

ARN. What's that, Dina dear! Do you think I wish to wrong you? Honest, it seems I don't understand you at all any more. Why, I'd give my life for you, for your walls, for this door . . . Eva, give me some more tea.

EVA. Drink your tea and keep quiet.

DINA. How about that other one around the corner, Arn? She's in love with you, too.

ARN. Stop it, Dina; honest.

EVA (*with curiosity*). Who is it, mother? All right, Arn, I'll tell Sonya.

DINA. And why don't you marry her? She loves you so much, and she's so pretty.

EVA. Elka! Did I guess it?

DINA. Yes, Elka . . . that queer Elka. . . .

ARN (*quickly*). Why d'you make fun of her?

DINA. I'm not. But she shouldn't come here and beg us to give up Arn to her.

ARN. Did she say that? Poor Elka!

EVA (*jealously*). And how about Sonya?

DINA (*suddenly*). Look who's standing by the window, Eva! She's folded her arms and she's looking in at us.

EVA (*turns quickly. With compassion*). It's Elka! Elka, Elka, what are you doing there?

ARN. Why did you come here, Elka? Do you think it's nice to stand by the window? What'll people say? They're sure to say: Elka's queer! And do you blame them?

ELKA (*smiling*). Well, why shouldn't they?

ARN. That isn't nice, honest!

EVA (*to* ELKA). Come on in! It's quiet here; we're having tea.

ELKA. I'm all right here. I can stand here and see you all, as in a dream. And I'm so happy, happy. There's Arn. I see you, Arn . . .

ARN (*slightly embarrassed*). What are you saying, Elka? You can't behave that way. People'll laugh at you. Go home, Elka.

ELKA (*naïvely*). Where *is* my home? (*Laughs quietly.*)

DINA. You see, Arn! Now, tell us, Elka, whom do you love?

ARN. Why are you acting so, Dina?

DINA (*vexed*). Because I want to! . . . Whom do you love, Elka?

ELKA (*meekly*). I love Arn. I love *you,* Arn! My heart is filled with you. I stand, chained to the earth, and I can't get away. I love *you,* Arn!

ARN. Why do you say that, Elka; why?

EVA (*astonished*). Aren't you ashamed, Elka? (*Comes closer to her.*) A girl shouldn't talk like that.

ELKA (*nodding her head*). Why? Didn't I tell the truth?

DINA. She's right. (*Sneering.*) Always tell the truth, Elka. It's the best way.

EVA. But I don't like it. When a girl loves, she doesn't talk about it. When people feel like talking about love, they go where it's dark. It's so good to make love at night . . . Come in, Elka!

ELKA. Arn won't like it. I'll stand here and look at you. It'll be like a dream — distant and true.

ARN. Oh, Elka, Elka! Why can't you understand?

ELKA (*with suffering*). Did I do anything wicked? I'll go away if you like. I'll go, Arn. I'll stay out in the yard; I'll walk about and won't even look in here, I swear I won't. And when you come out, I won't even turn around, I swear. And when you say, "Come here, Elka," I'll come, I swear I will!

DINA. Queer Elka! A strange girl.

EVA. I like her, mother. Elka, I love you. I wish I were like you. I'd like to feel your heart in me for just one minute . . . listen to its beats . . . know what it wanted.

ELKA (*sadly*). Everybody calls me: "Queer Elka, queer Elka!"

ARN. Go home, Elka. I'll come and call you. See, there's a crowd gathering; they're looking in here. Go home, please.

ELKA (*softly*). Yes, I'll go . . . I'm going . . . I don't feel hurt, Arn. No, no . . . (*Goes out leisurely.*)

DINA (*comes to the window*). What are you hanging around the window for? Haven't you windows of your own? Get out! (*Angrily closes the window and lowers the curtains.* GRANDFATHER *and* BOYM *come in.* GRANDFATHER *is old, very old and fat. Long gray beard. Bushy eyebrows, faded look. Wears a skull-cap and a long coat. Talks slowly, drawls.* BOYM *has a violin in one hand, a book in the other. Has a pointed beard and pince-nez. Pleasant voice. At the sight of* BOYM, EVA's *face brightens. She smiles. Even her voice changes.* DINA *talks to* ARN *in a low voice.*)

BOYM (*not stopping; to* GRANDFATHER). Yes, grandfather, I'm getting ready to go to Berlin.

GRANDFATHER. What? I can't hear!

BOYM (*laughing*). To Berlin, to Berlin!

GRANDFATHER (*after thinking*). Don't know; never heard of it . . . Is it far from here?

BOYM. Three days' travel. (*Counts on his fingers.*) One, two, three!

GRANDFATHER. How many? (*Stops.*)

EVA. Three days, grandfather, three days . . .

GRANDFATHER (*after thinking*). Yes, that's a long time. How do you go? Horses?

BOYM (*laughing*). No, railroad.

EVA. By railroad, grandfather . . .

GRANDFATHER. They say there are such things as railroads . . . I don't know, never saw one. Ho-hum!

DINA (*reservedly*). Come, grandfather, have some tea.

EVA (*comes to him and takes him by the arm*). Come, grandfather, I'll give you some tea.

GRANDFATHER (*laughing*). A big cup?

EVA. The biggest one. (*Sits* GRANDFATHER *down, at a distance from her mother.* DINA *looks at him out of the corner of her eye.*)

BOYM (*addressing everybody*). Folks, I'm getting ready to go to Berlin!

DINA (*indifferently*). Still getting ready?

BOYM. No, this time for sure. Here, I've even bought a book. (*Shows it triumphantly.*)

DINA. I suppose you couldn't find any other way to

throw away your money! You're crazy. You'd do better to give it to a beggar.

Boym (*laughing. Eva laughs also.*) Anyone listening to you'd go crazy! You don't know what kind of a book this is! It's a divine book! All I need do is close my eyes, and this miserable town disappears, these gloomy, dirty houses disappear . . . The shouting stops . . . The shouting stops. (*Sighs.*) I get drunk on this book . . .

Eva. Tell us about it, Boym! We're all listening.

Grandfather (*laughing*). And I don't see many things any more . . . Ho-hum! They've disappeared. (*Drinks his tea. Everybody turns in his direction.*) They're using oil-lamps now; in my time it was tallow candles, and we had snuffers for them. I don't see them around any more, either. Ho-hum! Yeah! That was . . . (*Lost in thought. Laughs.*) Can't remember. Forget everything; don't remember. I used to pray every day; I don't any more: I've forgotten my prayers. Ho-hum!

Dina (*with hatred*). That's all right, grandfather . . . Drink your tea! . . .

Grandfather. I put things down and then I forget where I've put 'em. (*Drinks tea.*) And all the time I feel sleepy . . . so sleepy . . . Ho-hum!

Dina (*jumps at him*). Shut up, grandpa, shut up! I can't bear to hear you talk that way.

Grandfather (*frightened*). Eh? What? Well, all right, all right! I didn't say anything. . . .

Eva (*turns to* Boym). We're all listening to you. What do you see?

Boym (*dreamily*). I see wide, large plazas. They're flooded with light. Thousands of suns are scattered in all the corners. Somebody has strewn suns in the streets, and people walk in their light. Wonderful people, pure and happy . . . Nobody's shouting . . .

Eva (*echoing*). Nobody's shouting . . . ?

Boym (*with longing*). I want to see those wonderful cities, those blessed lands, those happy people. I want to feel with my hands the asphalt of the plazas. To make sure they're real, real! If you want, Eva, I'll read you some-

thing? (*Puts the violin down on the chair and opens the book.*)

Eva (*sadly*). Life goes by and everything remains as it was. We live, full of curiosity, wondering what the next year's going to bring. And nothing happens! Nothing, Boym. . . . Well, it doesn't matter . . .

Dina (*sternly*). Eva, Eva!

Boym (*with passion*). No, it *does* matter. Eva dear, it can't go on like this. It can't. If there are such lands, such cities, then nothing can remain as it is. Those lands will come and will knock at every window: "Arise! Don't shout; arise!" Eva, look at me. How was I brought up? I'm a child of the dunghill. I was a stray, homeless child. But just the same, I grew up, and I'm going somewhere. What's drawing me ahead? Why, those beautiful lands, Eva, those wonderful cities. You shouldn't be afraid . . .

Eva (*softly and with confidence*). When you're here, I'm not afraid of anybody. I close my eyes and say, "Bring on the beasts!"

Dina (*rising*). Keep still, Eva; I tell you, keep still.

Eva. I'm not saying anything, mother.

Boym. Savage things revolt me. Are you the keeper of her soul, Dina? Are you the mother of her thoughts? Read how people live in other countries. (*Makes a gesture.*) No, Dina, I'm not defending Eva, I'm defending you. I'm defending the human in you. Do you want to soften, Dina? Do you want hungrily to suck the truth? Do you? Then wait! (*Makes a motion as if getting ready to run to his room.*) I'll fetch Byron . . .

Dina (*stopping him*). Don't bother! What are you good for, Boym? I pity you. You don't know how to make money; you give lessons; you play the fiddle. What kind of man are you? And are you a man?

Boym (*taken aback*). What? Why should I make money? I'm not a trader, Dina, I'm not a trader . . .

Dina (*angry; shrugs her shoulders*). Well, I don't know how to talk to you. Tell me. (Eva *laughs*). Don't laugh, Eva! I don't like it. (*To* Boym.) And when are you going to pay the rent? It's a month overdue, but I don't see any money.

Eva (*reproachfully*). Mother, mother!

DINA. But he should pay rent. Why shouldn't he? He didn't think anything about paying out money for a useless book?

BOYM. What are you saying, Dina? I'll pay. I'll get paid for my lessons and I'll give you the money. You're a peculiar woman! What is money, after all? But here's the book! Wait, just listen; just listen to what it says. Just for a minute forget all the cares of this gray, miserable life. You'll find something wonderful . . .

DINA (*frowning*). Leave me alone! . . . You're crazy!

ARN (*rising*). It's strange; honest.

BOYM (*thumbing the book*). But where's Sonya? I'd like her to hear this, too. (*Reads with emotion.*) "When seeing Berlin, it is best to start with *Unter den Linden.*" (*Repeats with emphasis.*) "*Unter den Linden.* That street is a favorite promenade of Berliners." (*Closes the book.*) Just think, just think! At this very minute, while we sit here, we plain, poorly dressed people, in a miserable room of a dirty house, — on *Unter den Linden* happy Berliners are promenading. All that wonderful street is now flooded with electric light. Asphalt roads; bicycles; electric trams; elegant women look into magnificent stores. . . . And we, Dina, we talk about God knows what, we shout . . .

EVA (*laughs*). More, more! Read, Boym . . .

DINA. I don't care about all that. I'm glad it's bright in my room, that there's a samovar on the table. . . .

GRANDFATHER. When I was young it was like this. When father sat down at the table, we all became quiet. Ho-hum! His sister, a widow, and her small children were living with us. (*Laughs.*) Everybody had to keep silent. Ho-hum! There were ten whips hanging up on the wall; one for each child. It was a strict house. . . . Strict. Ho-hum! . . .

DINA. The old mill's started again!

EVA. Be quiet, grandfather.

GRANDFATHER. I dream of my childhood all the time. The old men walk around me. . . . Ho-hum! They all died long ago, but they're still walking, walking. It's as if I'd seen them yesterday. . . .

DINA (*walks up to him and lifts him*). Well, go away now, grandfather. You've had your tea, now go away.

Arn (*rises again*). I'm so bored; honest. And Sonya isn't back yet. Read some more, Boym, or play something. You're lucky, Boym, you're educated. I envy educated people; honest.

Boym. Yes, it's fine to be educated. I've read Goethe, Dickens, Pushkin.

Arn. Really? (*Yawning.*) Goethe? How boring! Pushkin? (*Yawns and begins impatiently to pace the room.*) Play something.

Boym. No, I won't play.

Eva. Come on, grandfather! It's time for you to go to bed.

Grandfather. Well, all right, I'm going. . . .

Dina. Let him go by himself. (Eva *nods and tenderly leads her* Grandfather *away.*)

(Glank *and* Ber *come in.* Glank *is a sanctimonious looking old man with short-clipped beard, thinnish. Very kind face. Wears glasses. Wears a derby hat. Holds a thin cane.* Ber *is tall and fat. Very poorly dressed, patches on trousers. In place of a collar he wears a colored kerchief. Has a broad-brimmed hat on his head. Big, grizzled beard.*)

Dina (*loudly*). Set the table, Eva, your father's here. Who's with him? (*Everybody looks with curiosity.* Ber *smiles.*)

Glank (*pushing his glasses to his forehead*). Guess whom I've brought home, Dina darling? Well, take a look! (*Laughs like a baby.*) How do you do, all of you! (*Nods his head and waves his arms.*) Guess whom I've found? Yes — found. Found — I mean I've found him, and if you don't burst out crying, Dina darling, then you're harder than nails. (Ber *steps out to the front;* Dina *surveys him with attention.*) Well, who is it? I won't tell you his name. (*Laughs.*) Not for anything in the world! Guess! Remember?

Dina (*with impatience*). No, I can't recognize him, not even if you threaten to kill me. (Ber *laughs.*) I don't recognize him!

Ber. Don't you recognize me, Dina?

Glank (*laughing*). Some stunt I pulled! Well, Dina,

who is this, then? (*Laughs like a baby. Lowers his glasses.*) This is Ber, Ber! Here he is, take him! . . .

BER. Yes, I am Ber. Give me your hand, Dina. So we meet again, now we're old.

DINA (*throwing up her hands*). Ber? Impossible! (*Looks intently in his face.*) Yes, that's he, all right. You're gray. And look at the way you're dressed! Ber! What has life done to you, Ber!

BER. You too have changed, Dina. (*Looks at her.*) Yes, yes, there was no double chin — no wrinkles. Your face was more delicate . . . And your eyes! What eyes you had . . .

DINA (*touched*). How long is it since we saw each other? Twenty years? Twenty! Well, hello, hello, Ber. So this is Ber, Glank? . . . I can see myself in him.

BER (*sits down at a table and takes off his hat*). You were the prettiest girl in the neighborhood, Dina. You were the most modest, the best behaved . . .

GLANK. Do you remember her, Ber? Do you remember her braid, and the way she wore it? And how everybody was afraid of her because she was so proud? What's pride, anyway? Well, that's all right! Now, Ber, let me introduce my little girls to you. Eva, go and greet our visitor. Go, I tell you. Be polite. Simply go up to him, give him your hand, and that's all! . . .

EVA (*timidly*). How do you do. (*Extends her hand.*)

BER. She's the spit and image of you, Dina! How do you do, darling.

GLANK. This is my jewel, Ber. We have two crowns. This is the big jewel, and the other one is our star. . . . (*Searches with his eyes for* SONYA.) Where's little Sonya, Dina?

ARN. I'm bored, honest. I think I'll go. Good night. I'm so bored! (GLANK *shakes his hand without looking and continues to talk.* ARN *goes out.*)

GLANK. Little Sonya's a star, Ber. She's proud, but her heart is pure gold. She's my favorite. Where is she, Dina?

DINA (*frowning*). Sonya's out . . .

GLANK. So late! . . . And here is Boym, our Boym. Not a bad fellow. Plays the fiddle. Yes, the fiddle. (*He is displeased. Takes off his hat and overcoat and puts his cane*

in a corner.) I wanted to show you Sonya, Ber. She's the person you ought to see. (*Raises his head and sees a picture on the wall.*) Why doesn't this picture hang straight? (*Shakes his head.*) Eva, where's my hammer? And bring me my skull-cap, too.

Eva. Right away, father. (Eva *goes into the room on the left.* Glank *keeps looking at the small picture on the wall, between the doors on the left.*)

Dina (*softly*). And how has life treated you all this time, Ber?

Ber. It's a long story. I lived in a city not far away. Got rich. Now the money's gone . . . Been married; separated from my wife. Two sons. They live somewhere with their mother, or maybe alone — I don't know. I've tasted the bitter and the sweet of life. And I'm still on my feet. Moving along. It's all right, Dina! Everything'll be all right, everything'll be perfect. It's all right, Dina. . . . No need to worry. (*Looks around.*) It's pleasant here!

Glank (*impressively*). It's all her work! (*Points to* Dina.) Not mine, Ber; hers! (Eva *comes in.* Glank, *without looking, takes the hammer from her. Puts on the skull-cap.*) Without Dina we'd all have been lost. I've been out of a job for a year, but we've got everything we need, thank God. Eva, give me a chair. (*Climbs up on the chair and fusses with the picture.* Eva *holds him up.*)

Dina (*avoiding the subject*). Let's sit down. It's supper time. Eva, set the table. (*Both women go out.* Ber *gets up and paces the room. Surveys* Boym. Glank *gets down from the chair and looks at the picture.*)

Glank (*with triumph*). Now that's right! I like order. If I look around, I'm sure to find this or that out of order. Isn't it the truth? Well, how about it, Ber? Do you like it here? (Ber *nods his approval.* Glank, *with the hammer in his hand, looks for something else to set straight.*)

Boym (*surveying* Ber). Where did you come from last?

Ber (*affably*). I've been living here a long time. . . . About two years.

Boym (*naïvely*). When I see a man like you, I always feel sorry. I think, "He hasn't been able to get round obstacles."

Ber (*good-naturedly*). Why feel sorry? A man can stand anything.

Boym (*doubtfully*). Anything? That's hard to believe. . . .

Glank (*laughing*). Lock horns. Shake your fists.

Ber. Why did you say so softly, "Anything"? Say: "Anything!" Say it loudly, powerfully. I don't know you, but it seems to me that you've had a hard life. . . .

Boym (*pensively*). Yes, I have.

Ber. Then cheer up. First of all, cheer up. Pretty soon a gardener'll come into the orchard, and he'll fix up all the sick trees, and they'll get well. That's the way to think. In five or ten years we'll see many changes. We'll see miracles . . . (Eva *comes in with plates in her hands, puts them on the table, and listens.*)

Boym (*surprised*). How do you know?

Ber (*confidently*). We shall see miracles. Wherever I worked, whoever I talked to, they all say the same: there are going to be miracles! In five or ten years everything'll change. And that's why I say: Cheer up. First of all — cheer up. All this dirty city will be carried off and thrown in a big ditch that they will dig in a field. All these streets, all these nests of tears, these nests of sorrow will be carried off and thrown in the same big ditch. People are whispering everywhere, everywhere they're talking about this; quietly, to be sure, but they're talking!

Dina (*bringing in the supper*). Let's sit down.

Boym. I don't believe it; and why should I?

Ber. You've got to believe it. . . . Those that are stealing now will stop stealing; those that are shouting will stop shouting. And all those who are weeping will stop weeping. In five or ten years there'll be none of that. Men will be as free as they were when the world was created. That's what they're whispering about all around; that's what they're talking about all around; quietly, of course, but talking. Everyone will be happy and peaceful, and they'll be talking not about suffering and sorrow, but about happiness. That's the way the talk goes everywhere. And I repeat: Everything is going to be fine, just grand!

Eva. That's as lovely as a fairy tale.

Dina. This makes me feel better, Ber . . . It reconciles

me to life. You say it's going to be like that? Will it, though? (*Grimly.*) No, it's a lie, Ber. . . . It's a swindle. It's just one of those damnable, beautiful dreams that make you feel more miserable when you wake up. Let's eat supper. See how nice it is here, Ber. Warm, quiet, cozy. Let's eat supper. . . .

Boym. I was ready to embrace you, Ber. But Dina here woke me up. All you've said is a lie. It's a lie! Come to my room after supper. I'll read you about foreign lands. . . .

Dina (*with joy*). Tomorrow I'm going to buy Glank a new suit. There's vodka on the table. It's nice at our place, Ber! Sit down beside me. I'm going to give you the largest plate of soup.

Ber (*laughing*). Human beings are just human beings. Eating! What lovely creatures human beings are!

Glank. Ber, what do you say we have one small drink, just one!

Ber. No, I don't drink.

Boym. But I will. (*Pours himself a glass of vodka.*) Your health, Glank, and everybody's! (*Rises. Solemnly.*) And I drink to the health of that wonderful city of Berlin, to the elegant women of Berlin, I drink to Berlin! . . . (*Everybody looks at him with astonishment.*)

Dina (*smiling*). You're silly, Boym. (Boym *laughs.*)

Glank (*to* Ber). See this hammer? (*Takes it out of his pocket*). This is my friend. I walk around with a hammer and I keep looking. And I keep looking!

(Sonya *comes in. At the sight of a strange person she stops, perplexed.*)

Glank (*rising. With joy*). Sonya's back, Sonya's back! . . .

CURTAIN.

ACT II

A small room. Dark wallpaper. Two windows on the street. A door to the left and a door to the right. Lower middle class furniture. Knick-knacks, photographs, album. Sideboard and a long table. Bookcase with books. A wide couch. Two or three pictures on the walls. A couple of arm-chairs, the remnants of a former drawing-room set. Somewhat crowded. Warm sunny day. GLANK *with a hammer in his hand walks around the room, surveys the walls carefully, lifts the chairs. Knocks with the hammer and winks at* BER, *who is sitting on the couch.* SONYA *stands by the window — looking out.*

GLANK (*with triumph*). Here, you didn't believe me, Ber! The room is full of nails, and nobody notices it. Here's one! (*Turns a chair upside down.*) Where do they come from, Ber? Just overlook a thing, and the household goes to pot. (*Hammers at a nail.*) Let me pat you on the head. You would ruin clothes, would you?

BER (*laughing*). Hit it hard, Glank!

SONYA (*turning around*). It's about time you stopped pounding, father; my head aches. You pound the whole day long. . . .

GLANK (*laughing*). You see, Ber: they're all the same. I'm an old fool guarding everybody for nothing, and yet they're displeased! (*Raps the air with the hammer.*) And who tore her dress last week on this very chair? Well, who? Who? Who was shouting?

SONYA. As if nails were the only things that get in your way, father!

BER (*looking at her*). It's all right, Sonya, everything will be fine. My darling girl, don't worry about anything.

GLANK (*turns to her. Frightened*). Worry? What's that? What's happened, Sonya? My little star!

SONYA. Oh, father! . . . (*Makes a motion as if to run to him. Then checks herself.*) No, never mind! Everything's all right, everything's in order.

GLANK (*comes up to her and strokes her head*). All right? Then I'm happy! What do I want? The star shines, the jewel sparkles, and I'm satisfied. I don't want anything more. (*Again he walks and searches. Feels the*

walls with his hands. DINA *comes in. Seeing* GLANK *with the hammer in his hand, she throws up her hands.*)

DINA. Aren't you gone yet, Glank? Are you still here? You're crazy. Go down town.

GLANK (*shuddering*). How you frightened me! . . . Dina, darling, why do you shout? Ber, look at her. What a woman, what a worker, what a mother!

DINA (*in despair*). Why do you keep walking around with that hammer all the time? Have you gone crazy? Haven't you anything else to do, haven't you anything else to worry about? Or do you think all these breakfasts, dinners, suppers fall from heaven? Or is anybody making us a present of them? I let you stay at home until dinner, but you've got to go now. Go, look for work!

BER. Let him stay at home. (*Looks out the window.*) The sun has gone in; looks like rain . . . Where would he go now? . . .

DINA. Where? What do I care? If he intends to eat, let him bring the dinner. He hasn't earned a penny in a year's time. Does he intend to keep on sitting on my neck?

GLANK (*perplexed*). Where shall I go, Dina dear? Don't you see that I've no place to go, don't you understand? Who wants an old man, when there are so many young ones? I go into the offices, and I feel ashamed. . . . I feel so ashamed. Why should I horn in? What am I doing? They take one look at me, at my gray beard, at the way I walk. . . . Someone gets up and says, "Where are you going, old man? (*Turns away.*) What are you butting in for, old man!"

BER. That's so, Dina! I know . . .

DINA. I don't believe anybody and I don't want to hear anything. A living human being can be used anywhere. Put down your hammer, Glank! (GLANK *does not move.*) Give me that hammer! (*Wrests the hammer out of his hands and throws it on the floor.*)

GLANK (*shamefacedly and timidly*). I don't know why you're so angry, Dina.

DINA. Why I'm angry? I'll tell you! I'll tell you! Change your clothes and go down town, like other men. Don't let me see you here. Everybody's working, everybody's attending to his business . . .

GLANK (*pleading*). Dina, dear! Dina, darling! Why

do you shout at me? Don't shout at me. And what are you shouting about, anyway? And who are you? And who am I, Dina? Let me stay at home today. Just today! What am I going to do down town? I'm afraid of the streets, I'm afraid of people! Let me! . . .

SONYA. What are you doing, mother? Who? Him?

DINA. Don't interfere, Sonya! He ought to go. Eva's gone. . . . I know it's useless, but let him go. . . . Let people see that we don't just sit and fold our arms . . . that we're trying, that there are men in the house, men that have hands. (*To* GLANK, *talking as if to a baby.*) Go, Glank! You'll earn something. Stand on the main street; and look right, and then left. . . . Wait there. Somebody'll come along and ask how to find some street. Hang on to him, don't let go.

GLANK (*obediently*). Perhaps he will ask. . . . Why shouldn't he ask? What does it cost him to ask?

BER (*with compassion*). How you've changed, Dina! Where are your silent ways, your quiet voice? I've been watching for two weeks how you live: I don't like it, I'm pained. It's as if some good, honest person had deceived me.

GLANK (*with animation*). She is good, Ber. No, no, she's good.

SONYA. Ber! Your words are so nice! Tender! . . . It makes me feel peaceful; my heartaches go away . . . and it's so pleasant. . . .

DINA. You're sticking a knife into me, Ber. But I can't be angry with you! You're an old man now, but you're a baby just as you always were. Well, Glank, quit standing there and listening. Even Boym, even he has started to work. He doesn't play his fiddle any more; he works. . . .

GLANK. Work? Oh, yes, work. One has to work. . . .

DINA. Go on, then, go. See to it. (*Goes out.*)

GLANK (*plaintively*). Somebody invented work. And why should one work? When I was young, that was a different story. But now? (*Sighs.*) And I was getting ready to play dominoes with you. A fool: getting ready! If we had sat down we should have had our game, all right. But now: work! Oh, Dina, why don't you take pity on me?

BER. Don't get discouraged, Glank; we'll play tonight . . . I'll give you a ten point lead.

GLANK (*with joy*). You will? Honest? And why

shouldn't you? You're absolutely right. Well, if that's the case, then all right. I'm satisfied. I'm going.

SONYA. You're a baby, father. You don't know anything! A darling baby.

GLANK (*confused*). A fine baby! A fine baby, indeed. (*Laughs.*) My jewel! . . .

BER (*smiling*). Now you're talking too much again! Now go — or she'll come back and start shouting again.

GLANK (*hastily*). Yes, I'm going; I'm afraid of her . . . (*Goes into the room on the right.* BER *follows him with his eyes.*)

BER. Human beings are human beings always. Wonderful and pathetic — like children. They're all like that . . .

SONYA. How do you know all that, Ber? You must have suffered a lot?

BER. Sufferings don't add anything to you, Sonya. They only make you malicious; only that. I believe in goodness. . . .

(GLANK *returns. He is in his shirt sleeves.*)

GLANK (*with a mysterious air*). Ber, I have an idea. And why shouldn't I have one? It's easy enough. I'll dress up, go out, and make believe I've gone down town. But I won't go . . . (*Laughing.*) No, I won't go. Isn't it all the same, whether I go or not? My feet ache, I'm afraid of the streets. I'm afraid of people. Do you want to go with me, Ber? We'll sit on a bench at the corner for a while. And then we'll come back. . . .

BER (*smiling*). Well, that's a good idea. It's a fine idea, Glank.

GLANK. I have great ideas! (*Triumphantly goes out. Laughs merrily.*) I have . . . (SONYA, *lost in thought, paces the room.* BER *persistently follows her with his eyes.*)

BER (*tenderly*). Why are you so sad all the time, my girl?

SONYA. When I don't feel happy, I'm sad, Ber; when I do, I laugh.

BER (*shaking his head*). There's something on your mind, my darling girl. What is it? I don't know; can't think what it is! You're so young and yet you don't laugh; you're so sad all the time, so sad. And when I see you, I

feel like saying — don't worry, everything's going to be all right, everything will change.

SONYA (*softly*). No, it won't.

BER. When the ice breaks the river runs free. That's so. Here, I can see my whole life before me, Sonya. I walk along and I look on . . . If there's a break in the ice, I keep on walking. . . . I'm confident: it'll all clear up.

SONYA (*with incredulous curiosity*). Really? Does it always?

BER. Every single time. . . . Now, I'm going to tell you about myself. I owned a factory once. I employed twenty people in it. Little by little I got rich! D'you understand? And that started the whole story. . . . Was I put on this earth just to squeeze out money? Out of whom? Out of people? Out of living people? Am I here just to save money? (*With disgust.*) Money! I took a look: there was a break in the ice! I said to myself, "Give up your factory, set the people free! . . . " And so it was. I gave the factory away to the workingmen and I left. I felt so good after that. . . .

SONYA (*astonished*). What did you do that for, Ber? Why? And now you, poor thing, you work in a factory; lead a dog's life! Poor Ber . . .

BER. And who is rich?

SONYA. Mother'd never have done it. Nobody would have done it. Why, money is everything.

BER (*smiling*). Who said so?

SONYA. Everybody says so. Life itself says so.

BER. Everybody? Life? (*Shakes his head.*) When I had the factory, I was still living with my wife. We had two children . . . And when I saw I was getting drawn into the thing . . . Worrying about wife, about children, but forgetting about the rest of the people. And to me there's nothing dearer than people, Sonya. I'm not important to myself, but people are. I took a look: there was a crack in the ice. And then I said: "You go right and I'll go left."

SONYA (*throwing up her hands*). And your wife and children? You're strange, Ber. Don't you feel sorry? Don't you feel lonesome?

BER. I don't now, but it used to be pretty hard. . . . And so I went away, Sonya. Now I feel good. My heart's at ease. I work, I listen to what people say. . . . And people say

glorious things, powerful things. . . . Something is going to happen, Sonya, something is going to happen. . . .

Sonya (*uncomprehending*). I don't understand, I don't understand! You gave up riches, you gave up family; your clothes are all patched. . . . Somehow you frighten me! But all right, Ber, all right. (*Stops by the window and looks outside.*) But how have I lived? (*Turns to him.*) What have I done?

Ber (*tenderly*). Why are you so sad all the time, little girl? What ails you?

Sonya (*suddenly*). Ber! I can tell you, just as if you were my father . . . I can ask you. They say, all of them, "Do anything, just to keep alive."

Ber (*with vigor*). Tell them, "It's not so."

Sonya (*not listening to him*). Anything, just to keep alive. There's not a single thing that people can refuse to do. They say, "Steal if you have to, kill if you have to!" Is that true? What am I to say, what am I to answer? . . .

Ber (*with feeling*). No, no . . . Refuse to yield anything to life, Sonya! No, no, no! Not a single concession. If life demands love, say "I won't!" — and hate instead. If it demands sacrifice, say "I won't!" — and look out for yourself. Everything just the opposite, everything the opposite! If it puts rocks under your feet and says, "Don't walk there or you'll get hurt," say "I will!" —and go there, and get hurt. (*Arises.*) No, no . . . defiance, not a single concession. Whoever bends his head once, always stays bowed; I've seen it. (*Makes a gesture.*) That is the road of man.

Sonya (*with despair*). Then why did I listen to mother? Why did I do it . . . Ber? Call me an accursed, miserable creature! Ask me, "What have you done?"

Ber (*tenderly*). That's all right, Sonya! The end'll be beautiful . . . beautiful! In five or ten years you'll see. . . . It will be beautiful! Everybody talks about it; quietly . . . but they talk. Everybody is whispering — a different life is coming. It won't be long now! Another five or ten years . . .

Sonya. Five or ten years? Are you sure? And what will become of me?

Ber. You'll be all right. Everybody will be all right. And after fifty years, they say, no one will be unhappy. It'll

be hard to do this, but don't worry: they'll do it. People will bind life hand and foot and say to it, "Be quiet!" They'll start a big bonfire and throw the old life on it. They'll dance and sing around it, and it will all burn up.

SONYA (*with surprise*). Burn up? And I shall be forgiven? (*Excited.*) Then I'll recover myself, Ber! Believe me, I swear I will! Defy life, and no more concessions. If only, if only . . . (*Weeps.* GLANK *comes in. Is fussing with his necktie, which he is vainly trying to tie. At the sight of* SONYA *weeping he stops, frightened.*)

GLANK. Why, what is she crying about? What's happened, Ber? Why are you crying, my star?

BER. Let her have a good cry, Glank. It won't do her any harm.

GLANK. But why? Why? (*Comes up to her and strokes her head.*)

SONYA (*smiling*). If you only knew! . . .

GLANK. What? . . . I've come to ask you to tie my necktie. I must wear a necktie! What does a necktie amount to? But my hands shake, and I'm afraid Dina will run in and begin to shout.

SONYA (*crying and laughing*). Dear father! They're tormenting you! . . . (*Ties his necktie.*)

GLANK (*laughing*). Here I was dressing and thinking: What do I want with this white shirt and clean suit? In a minute I'm going to put on a hat and I'll look like a banker. I feel downright ashamed. . . .

BER. Time to go, Glank . . .

GLANK (*pensively*). I'm afraid of everything and everybody: streets, people, horses, dogs; and nobody suspects it. Funny, isn't it? Whom shall I tell it to, and looking like a banker, too. (*Laughs guiltily. To* SONYA.) You won't cry any more, will you? Don't cry, my star. The old man begs you not to; begs you very humbly. (*Runs into the room on the right.* ELKA *comes in. She has on a pink dress. Her hair is tied with a bright red ribbon.*)

ELKA. Here I am. Hello, Sonya! (*Takes a step backward, in admiration.*) How much prettier you look! And I keep growing thinner, growing thinner—You do, dear Sonya!

SONYA (*laughs softly*). Hello, Elka.

ELKA. You are laughing! May I tell you something?

You're laughing, and I've been thinking to myself, very quietly: Today Sonya won't be so haughty.

SONYA. I feel good now, Elka. Ber, there's joy in my heart, there isn't anything I couldn't do now. . . .

ELKA (*turning around*). Is this Ber? Are you Ber? (*Takes a step backward and surveys him.*) Such a frightful man! (*Long laugh.*) Such a funny, fat man! . . . (*Suddenly.*) Give me your hand.

BER (*softly*). What for?

ELKA (*gravely*). One poor soul shakes hands with another poor soul. (*Lost in thought.*) My father had hands like these, fat and warm. He was killed! Are you unhappy, too, Ber?

BER (*stroking her hand*). You are a good girl! a good girl!

ELKA (*suddenly raising his hand to her lips. Reproachfully*). Why don't you let me? If a person wants to kiss somebody else's hand, he must know why. One poor girl kissed a poor man's hand . . . just to show affection. (*Kisses his hand.*)

SONYA (*suddenly*). Elka! You start talking and all my happiness flies away. I feel uneasy. A mountain rises up in front of me, and I can't go any further.

(GLANK *comes in. He is already dressed, wears a hat, carries a cane.*)

GLANK. Come on, Ber. Ah, Elka! Hello, Elka.

ELKA. How do you do . . . I dropped in to see your Sonya. . . .

(DINA *comes in. She brings in a lamp and puts it on the table.*)

DINA (*annoyed*). Are you still here? When are you going?

GLANK (*timidly*). I've been changing my clothes, Dina.

DINA. Well now start off. (*Notices* ELKA.) And Elka is here? Came in again?

ELKA (*smiling guiltily*). Like a butterfly! I fly into a room, flutter around, and fly out again . . .

DINA. But you wouldn't think of working? Flying all the time?

GLANK. Coming, Ber? And what are you thinking of all the time? That would make my head ache.

BER (*smiling*). I'm thinking, Glank, that everything's going to be splendid. . . . And what splendid quarters we'll have, and how comfortable! (*Earnestly.*) Dina won't shout any more. And Elka's room will be golden, golden . . . (*He is already outside the door when the last word is said.* DINA *takes both chairs and carries them out. Pause.*)

ELKA. It's so quiet. . . . (*A long and pleasant laugh.*)

SONYA (*occupied with her own thoughts; reluctantly*). How are you, Elka? How is your grandmother getting along?

ELKA. Grandmother? Blind, blind as ever. She's hard to manage now. Her legs are swollen, and she can't go out. She cries most of the time. At night she ties a string to me so that I can't run away, and so we lie there until morning.

SONYA. How can you stand it?

ELKA (*not listening*). I came to ask you, Sonya darling . . . Don't look at me that way. (*Pleading.*) Sonya, Sonya . . .

SONYA (*tenderly*). Ask me about what?

ELKA (*sits down by her side*). You won't get angry? You won't say to Elka, "Go away, Elka"?

SONYA (*impatiently*). Well, spit it out.

ELKA (*suddenly deciding*). Don't torment Arn, Sonya. I can't bear it, I can't. I'll give him up to you. I give him up now.

SONYA (*turning red*). Does he still remember me?

ELKA (*sadly*). He's torturing himself, Sonya. So I came to ask you to be good to him. I'll give him up. I don't want his tears. (*Echoing.*) His tears! His sighs? (*Echoing.*) His sighs!

SONYA (*with curiosity*). Tell me Elka, tell me . . .

ELKA. Whom do I love? Him or myself? But he loves Sonya. I lay awake all last night and thought, He loves Sonya! Dear Sonya, call him, say to him: "Sonya loves you."

SONYA (*carried away*). I'll call him! And do you think I'm going to say, "Arn, I . . . " It's out of the question, Elka. He'd see through it. I shall say, "Arn, I . . . " He'll understand, Elka?

ELKA (*softly*). Yes, he'll understand.

SONYA. I'll shake the weight off my shoulders, and I'll

sigh with relief. Elka, I love you; I love you all. See this wall? I love this wall! See the sky? I love the sky! Let Arn come!

ELKA. I'll be going, Sonya. I won't even sigh; I won't even cry. . . . And if I do cry a little, you won't be angry, will you? Somewhere in a corner sits a girl . . . and she's crying. . . . Let her cry!

SONYA (*not listening*). Elka, look at me and tell me, how do I look? You don't see anything peculiar in my eyes, do you?

ELKA. Your eyes are beautiful.

SONYA. How does my face look? (*Rises.*) Look again. Feel my hands. You don't see anything?

ELKA (*uncomprehending*). I don't understand, Sonya. What do you want?

SONYA (*impatiently*). What do I want? I want nothing. Look how I walk. You don't see anything? Elka, I'm shaking mountains off my back. Elka, I'm holding up my head again!

ELKA (*rises*). I'm going. How splendid I feel, Sonya! I'm happy, happy! Let me kiss you. How good you smell! Arn is going to be crazy with happiness. How splendid! . . . I know a girl who will hide away in a corner and think, "Arn is happy, happy. . . . "

SONYA (*listens intently*). You are so wonderful, Elka! What am I beside you? (*Walks with her to the door.*)

DINA (*comes in carrying the chairs*). This pair of chairs is all that's left of a dozen I used to have. And this pair won't last very long. (*Puts them on both sides of the couch.*) Has that crazy girl gone? What did she have to say?

SONYA (*indifferently*). Nothing.

DINA. Arn again? You might tell her to stop coming here.

SONYA. I might! (*Laughing.*) Yes, I might. That's it, you're always right. (*Paces the room. Laughs, sings. At times becomes lost in thought.*)

DINA (*tidying up the room*). Where did Ber go?

SONYA (*repeats mechanically*). Where did Ber go? (*Looks in a mirror, takes a dress out of the wardrobe and looks it over. Sings.*) Where did Ber go? (*Looks into*

Boym's *room, on the left.*) And Boym? is he working all the time?

Dina. I respect Boym now. (*Stops her tidying.*) What did you get that dress out for? Are you going out?

Sonya. Where should I go? . . . I'll sit here and look at you. (*Sings.*) Where did Ber go?

(Grandfather *comes in. He walks with heavy, slow steps.* Dina *turns her face away from him.*)

Grandfather. I've had depressing dreams. Ho-hum! I can't get away from them.

Sonya (*turns to him*). Grandfather! What dreams? What are you talking about?

Grandfather. Old dreams, old life. People crawl out of the ground — and they weep and they choke me. . . . Ho-hum! Yes, it used to be hard in the old days, not like now. Ho-hum! (*Sits down on the couch.*)

Dina. Get off that couch! Right away! You can sit on a chair.

Sonya. No, and it isn't much better now, is it, grandfather?

Grandfather (*taken aback*). What, how? On the chair? Well, all right! (*Sits by a window and looks about for* Sonya.) In my time they used to flog people on a scaffold; made them run the gantlet. . . . I see the scaffold in my dreams . . . blood on the ground . . . Ho-hum! (*Sighs.*) The old things weep and make me choke. . . .

Sonya (*compassionately*). When are you going to die, grandfather? Nobody wants you; nobody loves you; you're a nuisance to yourself!

Grandfather. What? I keep praying: "Lord, send me death!" But He doesn't.

Dina (*looking out of the window*). Here comes Eva. (*Looks again.*) Her head's down. I knew it.

Sonya (*goes up to the window and looks outside*). Poor Eva! All the time searching, searching . . .

Grandfather. The fogs rise, crawl, crawl and choke. . . . Ho-hum!

Dina (*impatiently*). Shut up!

(Grandfather *stops his talk, frightened.* Eva *comes in. Takes off her hat gloomily. Sits down.*)

DINA (*sneering*). Again, nothing! What did I tell you?

EVA. Then don't jump on me, don't drive me out. This'll end badly. I tell you; it'll end badly.

DINA. Don't try to scare me. What do you mean by saying it will end, it will end? . . . (*Quickly.*) Why?

EVA. Look out of the window, you'll see why!

DINA (*rushing to the window*). He is looking this way. . . . How handsome he is and how well dressed! He must be rich . . .

EVA. Ask him!

DINA. I will. You can't scare me. (*Makes a motion as if to go out.*)

SONYA (*threatening*). Don't you dare go! I forbid you. I know; I know why you want to go out! . . .

DINA. All the better if you do. (*Goes out despite* SONYA's *attempt to hold her back.*)

EVA (*wearily*). Let her go. . . . It doesn't matter. Who's going to save me? I ran away from him and all the time I thought: Where am I running to? Who will protect me? My own mother will take me into a corner and begin to whisper . . .

SONYA (*softly*). Will begin to whisper . . .

EVA. And is *this* what we've got to live for? . . . Is it, Sonya?

SONYA. You can't say to her, "I won't"?

EVA. Tell her? I? No, I can't. I'm afraid of her. It's all right for you, Sonya. Nobody can make *you* do these things. . . . But I . . .

SONYA (*looks at her strangely*). Really? You think so?

EVA. Nobody takes me seriously. But you are proud, everybody's afraid of you. Father loves you . . .

SONYA (*confusedly*). Now you're crying. We're so unfortunate, Eva, so lonely!

EVA. I hate her. She'll ruin me and then say, "We've got to live! You're going to have silks and gold!" . . . She keeps whispering . . . and my head goes round . . . and I don't know — what I want.

SONYA. It's terrible, and you must keep clear of it.

EVA (*suddenly*). I'll kill myself!

SONYA. Now, now! Don't be crazy! No, no, no!

EVA. You ought to know what's in my heart! I don't want to submit to her. I won't! Never! Never!

SONYA (*terrified*). What's happening? If people only knew! What have we come to! And once it used to be so merry at home. . . . People came to see us. . . . Remember, Eva? We used to laugh. . . .

EVA. I wish *you* were my mother, Sonya! I could put my head on your shoulder and cry and cry. Put your arms around me, Sonya. Am I so wicked? What's good in me is still there. But it's frightful: mother's driving me out, throwing stones after me!

SONYA. Stop, Eva. I can't stand it much longer; I'm going to cry, too.

EVA. Listen, Sonya: Boym lives here . . . You won't tell anybody? Boym lives here, and I've fallen in love with him. Turn your face away, Sonya! But he doesn't say a word. Boym doesn't say a word. . . . He talks about everything, but he doesn't say a word about this. (*Suddenly.*) Why did I tell you? You won't laugh at me, will you? You won't say: "Eva's in love!"

SONYA (*with sudden feeling*). You're unhappy, and you make me unhappy. I really can't stand any more torment . . . There are so many wounds in my heart that no one can look at me without hurting me.

EVA (*frightened*). Sonya, Sonya, don't say that! It hurts me. You're so proud, you shouldn't talk that way.

SONYA. Well, all right, let's not say a word. Let's clench our teeth and let's keep silent. (*Ready to cry.*) No, no, I won't cry.

(DINA *comes in. She is out of sorts and gloomy.*)

DINA. He drove away! I couldn't even have a word with him. So elegantly dressed! Look out, Eva; look out, young lady!

EVA (*almost in a whisper*). What am I doing?

SONYA (*in a rage*). Stop, mother! I'll call down God's curse on your head! Aren't you satisfied? Isn't one enough?

DINA. What's got into you? Who are you talking to?

SONYA (*beside herself*). Shut up! If you don't, I'll run out into the street and shout, "Dina sells her own daughters!"

DINA (*frightened*). Not so loud, damn you! Boym'll hear. . . .

SONYA. Then you won't! You won't! (*Long pause.*)

GRANDFATHER (*laughing*). There! First they were shouting, and now everything's quiet again. Quiet, very quiet . . . Ho-hum!

SONYA. Well, it's all right, grandfather! Enjoy yourself.

(BOYM *comes in, looking tired. His eyes burn feverishly.*)

BOYM. My fingers won't move, I've been working so hard at that copying job. (*Paces the room.* EVA *follows him with her eyes.*) I've neglected my violin. All this will come later, later! Now I must think of tutoring, of copying, and of money. (*Looks around.*) Why, you all look as if something were wrong? Dear Sonya, dear Eva!

SONYA (*looking at him curiously*). So, you have noticed? Do you ever notice anything? (*Surveys herself in the mirror.*) Tell me, Boym, do you see me?

EVA (*laughing softly*). He doesn't see anybody.

BOYM (*laughing*). I see you, Sonya. Today you look grand, your face is proud!

SONYA. Really? And do you see Eva? Where is Eva? Point her out to me.

EVA (*embarrassed*). Sonya!

BOYM (*still pacing*). Folks, I'm happy today!

DINA (*sneering*). When weren't you happy?

BOYM. No, this is something different, something new, Dina. You know how I feel in this city? Like a dead man in his grave. I am a stranger to everybody and everybody's a stranger to me. Human sufferings do not move me. I feel affection neither for people nor for houses. I walk along the streets, and everything looks empty and dead to me. As Goethe said so beautifully . . . (*Recites sadly.*)

> The peaks of the mountains sleep in the nocturnal darkness;
> The quiet valleys are full of gray fog.
> The wheels do not creak on the road, the leaves do not rustle . . .

And yet I am happy, Dina! I feel myself there, Sonya, in

the beautiful lands, in the wondrous cities. . . . With all my heart I do!

Eva. I envy you, Boym!

Dina. I don't understand all this stuff — and I don't want to. . . .

Boym. You may be right, Dina. Perhaps it is better to be deaf and blind; not to dream, not to thirst! . . . But today I'm happy, insanely happy. I've figured out that if I keep on working like this, I can get abroad by fall. I'm going abroad, Dina! I feel like taking you in my arms and whirling you around the room.

Eva (*softly. With despair*). Abroad?

Sonya (*sadly*). Abroad?

Dina. I've always said that anyone who plays the fiddle can't have any brains in his head. What are you going to do abroad, Boym? You'll starve to death. Or do you think you'll find another Dina who'll feed you and wait months for her money?

Boym. Money! All the time money! . . . No! Look here: Compare this city, where everybody shouts so much, and those foreign lands. This fright, and that quiet and joy. The heavens, and an open bleeding wound! Look around you, what do you see? Long, dirty streets, dirty houses, people weeping . . . Wait a minute, I'm going to read you something, Dina. (*Runs into his room.*)

Dina (*shouting after him*). Don't, don't. We believe you.

Boym (*from the room*). You don't have to. I'm going to read to you, so you can see for yourselves. (*Comes out with a book in his hand.*) I want to make your heads spin. It transforms a man; it makes him handsome, noble; it elevates him. Dina, look. Here is our city, our streets; remember our alleys, our dirt, our dark nights . . . And now, listen. (*Reading with pathos.*) "Royal square! Monument to Bismarck. Wide pedestal of red marble. At its summit, in all his mighty stature, proudly and firmly stands the First Chancellor in his long cuirassier's uniform. Bismarck sternly and intently gazes into the distance. His eyes glitter and almost jump from their sockets. His flowing mantle scarcely touches his gigantic shoulders . . . "

Dina. Quit it, Boym; that's enough. . . . What nonsense! It was probably written by some other Boym.

Boym (*waving her away*). Please, don't interrupt, please.

Eva. Read, read.

Boym (*reading*). " . . . To the right of the monument is an inanimate sphinx in its usual classic pose. To the left, in a proud military pose, with a pointed helmet on her head stands a young and beautiful German maiden who, with her strong, armored foot, mercilessly crushes the head of a dying panther." (*Closes the book. Lowers his head.*) Dina, if that didn't move you, then you're not human! Nothing of a higher order, which elevates a man over this miserable earth, over its sorrows, finds any reply in you. Then what do you live for? What do you walk the ground for?

Eva (*suddenly*). Didn't you have something to say to me, Boym?

Sonya. It's as sweet as music; it makes you feel like soaring away somewhere.

Boym. I'm tired . . . tired . . . I work day and night like a galley-slave. I *must* get away. . . . I'm afraid to stay here any longer; it's unbearable. Quick, quick! I've got to get away from these sick, crippled, tormented wretches, from these horrors, this darkness, this savagery. . . .

Sonya (*seizes her dress and goes toward the room on the right. To* Dina.) Come on, mother; help me. I want to change my dress.

Dina (*sternly*). I won't!

Sonya (*insisting*). Come on, come on!

Dina (*displeased*). Coming, Eva?

Sonya. No, no, let Eva stay here. I don't want her. (Dina, *displeased, shakes her head and walks out with* Sonya.)

Eva (*after a pause; softly*). You talk so wonderfully, Boym; no one could listen to you without feeling something stirring inside. I'm unhappy, I want something. Those wonderful lands! . . . Why do you talk about them? Isn't it better not to know about them? These wonderful lands! I pray to them. . . . I see those plazas, flooded with light, I see them in my dreams. (*Suddenly.*) You didn't want to say anything to me, did you?

BOYM (*thinking a moment*). No, nothing. . . .

EVA (*sadly*). Your words flow and flow; but I don't find any that are meant for me. But it's all right, Boym. Perhaps this is the best that fate has for me?

BOYM. There are times when I don't understand you.

EVA. Look around. No, you don't see; you don't understand anything! Boym, I'm eighteen. . . . What next? I'll be nineteen. What next? I'll be twenty. And then? A long, weary string of years without aim, without joy . . . And what for? Don't you see? We're on the edge of an abyss! An abyss with a huge black mouth.

BOYM (*thoughtfully*). Yes, the abyss is at our feet . . .

EVA (*sadly*). Who, in this life, will miss the chance of hitting me? Who, as he goes by, will fail to take a kick at me, to trample on me? Who'll just simply think: Here's a girl who wants to live like a human being. Like a human being, Boym.

BOYM (*moved*). Yes, yes, dear Eva, you're right. There's a curse on everything here, and that's why I'm running away from it all. (EVA *laughs.*) Why do you laugh?

EVA (*through tears*). I'm right; yes, I *am* right! . . .

DINA (*from inside*). Eva; come here, you've talked enough!

EVA. Do you hear, Boym? Well, think fast. You didn't want to say anything to me, did you?

BOYM (*surprised*). No, nothing! (*Looks out of the window.*) It's raining! What made you think that? You're a strange girl, Eva . . . strange.

EVA. Well, then . . . all right! I'm glad, Boym . . . glad! (GLANK *pokes in his head from* BOYM's *room.*)

BOYM (*noticing* GLANK). Look, Eva! Your father!

EVA (*surprised*). Yes, that's father. (*Runs up to* GLANK.) Why don't you come in?

GLANK (*smiling guiltily*). I'm afraid of *her.* Is she angry? It started to rain; so I came back.

EVA (*to* BOYM). And that's supposed to be a man! (*To* GLANK.) Come in, quick! Oh, you poor thing! . . .

BER (*comes in*). This is a *real* rain!

(GLANK *still stands by the door and looks out apprehensively.* DINA *comes in.*)

Dina (*displeased*). She got me in her room and wouldn't let me go. Oh, Ber! You're all wet! What is it, rain? Go into the hall before you mess up the whole room. Eva, make some tea. (*Sees* Glank *in the doorway.*) What? Are you back already?

Glank (*plaintively*). Yes. Back, back. . . .

Dina. Couldn't you wait somewhere till it stopped raining? (*Comes to the door.*) Well, come in, you breadwinner!

Glank. And you're not going to shout? . . .

Dina (*in a rage*). He's got a nerve to argue! Well . . . Come in, you old crock, come in, you good-for-nothing.

Glank (*coming in*). First you send me off; you drive me out: "Go, Glank!" And what does "go" mean? And go — where? And if I did go? I suppose you think the city would declare a holiday! Everybody would say, "Well, if Glank has decided to start, we'll give him a job." See, my hat's ruined. And I'm not going to buy a new one tomorrow, either; no, I am not! I won't give anyone that pleasure. (*Takes off his overcoat.*) And the coat, too. . . . It's a pretty good overcoat, but it's wet. (*Carefully spreads it on the couch.*)

Dina (*angrily snatches the coat from his hands*). Go to hell with your overcoat! Flooding everything! Don't you feel sorry for Dina? What is Dina to you? A horse? An ox? . . . Let her slave! Oh, you good-for-nothing!

Glank (*humbly*). I don't say I amount to much. Did I ever say that I did? Not I! (Ber *comes in.*)

Ber. Well, here we are home again. Everything's coming out all right. And what were you afraid of, Glank? Didn't I tell you that Dina was a good, reasonable woman?

Dina. You'd better keep quiet, Ber! (*Goes out, annoyed. Takes* Glank's *overcoat along.*)

Glank (*more cheerful*). Well, thank God! Oh, glory be to God! How I love my home. And what does "home" mean? (*Catches himself and laughs.*) No, I wanted to say something else. Ber, it's so pleasant here. We're going to have tea now. Dina, angel, is a little angry, but that's all right! The kiddies are at home, it isn't wet here, nothing falling down from the sky. And why did God say that I should earn money? Couldn't He have made me a woman instead? . . . (Boym *goes to his room;* Eva *goes into the room*

on the left.) And what a woman I'd have made! You think that I'd have been like Dina, eh? No . . . (BER *nods his head.*) I'd have been a little lamb . . . I'd have cooked dinner, looked after the kiddies. And I'd have loved everybody; I'd have had love, only love, for everyone. . . . (*Laughs.*) And I'd have pitied my husband. I'd have had so much pity for him! (*Takes* BER *by the arm and walks out with him.*)

GRANDFATHER (*rising*). Life is hard. Oh, so hard. (*Slowly walks out.* SONYA *comes in. She has on a new dress. She sits down on the couch and buries her head in her hands. From* BOYM'S *room* ARN *comes in. He closes the door behind him.*)

ARN. At last, I've caught you in.

SONYA (*startled*). Arn! You frightened me!

ARN. What's this coming to, Sonya?

SONYA (*pulling herself together*). I don't know . . .

ARN. Who does? Your mother won't give her consent, is that it? Well, then I'll go and beg you from your mother. I'll sit down beside her, like her own son, and I'll tell her everything as nicely as I can, and she'll give you to me.

SONYA. No, that's not it. . . .

ARN. Perhaps there's a wall between us? Then I'll break it down. Perhaps people stand between us? Then I'll brush them aside.

SONYA. Why don't you look at me? Doesn't my face tell you anything?

ARN. You're even more beautiful. You've matured, somehow. . . . Honest.

SONYA. Take a good look. Have my eyes changed?

ARN. You ask funny questions. You've never asked anything like that before! (*Comes close to her and looks at her intently.*) No, you're still the same. No, you're more attractive. Your arms are rounder. I want to kiss them. . . .

SONYA (*looking back at the door; quickly*). No, no, you mustn't kiss my arms, Arn. I hate them.

ARN (*reproachfully*). Sonya!

SONYA. What can you do? You can't bring yesterday back and live it over, differently.

ARN. I don't know what's got into you. We used to talk quite differently. Remember? In the evening we'd sit

on a bench at the end of the street. . . . What did we talk about? I don't remember. But it seems to me that birds were flying around us. . . . It seems to me that we talked about a wedding. And that white wedding dress that we used to see is still waiting for you . . . at the end of the street, under a tree.

SONYA. Don't remind me of it.

ARN. In the evening we used to sit on a bench, under the tree, at the end of the street. . . .

SONYA (*frankly*). I'm glad you came, that you found me in. . . .

ARN. Are you telling the truth?

SONYA. I'm so glad that you're standing here and that I can't run away. I'm so glad that you can take hold of me and make me kneel to you.

ARN. Listen, I've forgotten everything, even those three months. Listen, I've forgotten my tears and my jealousy. (*Takes her arm and draws her close to him.*) Give me your hands. How grown up you are, Sonya. (*Kisses her.*)

SONYA. It may be a dream . . . but it's a lovely dream. If I could only be worthy of you! I used to grieve so. . . . In the mornings it was hard . . . unbearable. . . . I said to myself: Evening will come, but I shan't see Arn.

ARN. But why? No, I won't ask. (*Intoxicated.*) Will you come out tonight? . . . The rain'll stop; it'll be bright, the trees'll be fragrant; we'll sit on the bench, at the end of the street . . .

SONYA. Let's not think. (*Kisses him.*) Why should we? If only people didn't think! If only they had no consciences, if only men were like stones. . . . If only . . . if only . . . (*Suddenly.*) Now, suppose you found out something bad about me, would you forgive me?

ARN. You couldn't do anything bad.

SONYA. No, I couldn't. Let's not think about it. If only there were no family, no father, no grandfather . . . if only . . . if only . . .

ARN. I'm in heaven. I love everything you say. . . .

SONYA. Look into my eyes. You don't see anything in them, do you?

ARN. Nothing; honest. You have lovely eyes.

SONYA. We *have* brought back yesterday. When you

get home and tell your mother, Arn, "In one month I shall marry Sonya," she'll be glad. . . . Let's not think! (*They sit locked in each other's arms.* Dina *comes in. Seeing* Arn, *she stops, dumfounded.*)

Dina (*shouting*). What have you done, Sonya? What have you done? (Sonya *and* Arn *jump up, startled.*) It shall never be. No, no! I won't have it. No, no, no!

CURTAIN.

ACT III

Boym's *room. Wooden bed, next to it a tiny table. On the bed sits* Grandfather. *A small wardrobe, a chest of drawers. In one corner a wooden music stand. On the floor are strewn empty cigarette boxes, old papers and other rubbish. In the middle of the room* Ber *is busy with a large basket.* Eva, *squatting down, is packing things in a suitcase. Early winter. Evening. It is cold. A lamp burns. First snow has already fallen. The moon shines through the window.* Sonya, *in a shawl which conceals her figure, is standing by the window, looking out on the lighted yard.* Boym, *excited, runs around the room.*

Boym. What else must I take along? I mustn't forget anything. . . . (*Lifts the music stand and looks it over. Carries it over towards* Eva.) Eva, dear, I've decided to give you this music stand as a present, to remember me by. I can't possibly take it with me.

Eva. I'll take care of it, and when you come back . . .

Boym. I'll never come back here. Again? To this city? No, never! (*Bends over the suitcase.*) I'm not even going to remember it. I can't forget soon enough that somewhere on the face of the earth there is such a city.

Eva (*sighing*). You're right! (*Shrugs her shoulders.*)

Ber (*still fussing with the basket*). And why do you have to go away? Must you go *now?*

Boym (*lifting the books from the floor*). Yes, now. (*To* Eva.) Why, you forgot to put in the books! Oh, my Lord! My books! Put them right here.

Eva. Who in the world puts books on top? You don't know how to do things. How are you going to live? (*Takes the books from him.* Boym *laughs.*) Oh, these are *the* books! What have you done, books, what have you done? . . .

Sonya (*with regret*). It's winter already! (*Wraps herself in the shawl.*)

Eva. And spring'll come. Who'll live to see it?

Ber. All of us. We shall, all right, don't worry.

Boym. I'm not going to see the spring here with its mud, with people in torment, with dying children. . . . Thank God!

Sonya. And winter's here already . . .

Ber. I'm glad of it. It's easier to breathe.

Boym (*locking the suitcase*). Well, the suitcase is ready. What are you still fussing around for, Ber? (*Laughs indulgently.*) You're a good fellow, Ber. In a pinch you help; in a pinch you scold. . . . You *are* a good fellow! Well, Mr. Suitcase, you go into the other room! (*To* Eva.) We'll have tea, and then I'll be on my way. (*Looks at his watch.*) In half an hour I'm leaving. Strange, isn't it: leaving forever? I thought these last five months would never end, and now it seems as if they'd never existed. . . . (*Lifts the suitcase.*)

Eva. I'll help you, Boym. Please let me.

Boym. Why? D'you think I can't lift a suitcase? I can carry two of 'em.

Eva. But I want to. I'd so like to! . . .

Boym (*laughing*). Let's carry it together. (*Both go out.*)

Sonya (*following* Eva *with her eyes*). Poor Eva, poor Eva.

Ber. It's all right! Everything'll be all right. . . . The soil shall cover the seed, and the grain shall grow therefrom. . . .

Sonya. But when? When? The first snow has fallen, and things are worse than ever. You expect something from the passing days as from passing people; and both deceive you. Always deceit, deceit in everything.

Ber. Instead of complaining, help me tie the basket.

Sonya. But nobody helps *me.* (*She comes up, lifts the*

basket, and lets it down again.) No, I'm not going to. I'd rather go around suffering.

BER (*tenderly*). I'll do it myself. (*Ties the basket.* BOYM *comes in.*)

BOYM. Ber, Sonya, let's have tea! It's on the table.

BER. All right. I'll be through with this basket in a moment. (BOYM *goes out.*)

SONYA (*to* BER). Can't you see a thing, Ber? Are you blind? (*Makes a gesture of despair.*) No, I'll keep still.

BER. What do you expect me to see? And what'd I understand even if I did see? (*Makes believe he is listening to something.*) D'you hear? . . . They're knocking somewhere. D'you hear? Somewhere, something's toppling over! . . .

SONYA. But suppose I've no strength left? (*Comes to the window and looks outside.*) What if my heart has grown *so* small (*indicates with a gesture how small*) and I still have to live? Nothing to live for; nobody to live for; nobody cares! But I must! . . .

BER. What does any person matter, any single person? (*Walks away from the basket.*) Well, anyway, the basket's ready.

SONYA (*steps back from the window*). Arn's walking with that girl again! Every evening they walk under my window, and I have to look at them. Look, here they come. They! Ber, help me. You make everybody feel so good with you . . . Ber! I haven't the courage to come out and say to him, "What are you doing, Arn!" I haven't the courage to get angry at him. . . . I haven't courage for anything. Why did I listen to you? It just stuck more knives into me.

BER. Well, but you pulled the old ones out.

SONYA. But where's justice? Where's truth? Why, Ber? And Elka comes to see me every day now, and we both cry. . . . And here I am. . . .No, I'll be quiet. . . . And here I am. . . . No! No! No! What does Arn talk to her about? Ber, the same lips are saying in the same words, "Our wedding's coming soon!" I'd like to look into his eyes. Just for one minute. (*Looks out of the window.*)

BER (*softly; sarcastically*). Justice? It makes you impatient to suffer. . . . Justice! Where is it? You feel like taking hold of it and putting it down in front of you, so that

you can kick it and shake it! Justice, why do you keep still? Where is your law? (*With irony.*) Delusion! . . .

Sonya (*softly; with horror*). Delusion!

Ber. Justice! It's here, it's there; and there it is, and there it isn't! You cry out, you demand, "Justice, justice!" Who hears you? Yet there it is — a shadow! A shadow! It grows bigger; it grows smaller; one moment it's here, the next — it's gone! Try to catch it! . . . Catch what? Yes, what? (*Laughs ironically.*) Look back!

Sonya. I don't understand, Ber! (*Puts her hands to her head.*)

Ber. Look back! Everything develops from something else. Here are the things, there is their shadow. And that is justice! If things line up one way, there's one kind of justice! Put them in a different way, there's another kind of justice! So! You thought you'd caught us! But our blood burns with the new faith. And you thought you'd caught us? What's a person, a single person? And what are two people? And what are three people? Let's turn things around, and then everybody'll laugh . . .

Sonya. I shall never laugh again . . .

Ber. You will, I tell you, you will. Look at me. This body lives, these legs walk, these hands work. A worm among worms; but I walk, I work, I laugh, for in five or ten years things will stand in a different relation to each other. What does a man need? Three yards of ground. And what does a man want? The whole world! But the truth is somewhere in between. We've traveled in crooked lanes, and we've traveled in wide streets. Whither? But whither? In five or ten years everybody will find out.

Sonya. Arn is gone! How good it is to talk about happiness in a warm room. I shall never know this joy again. . . . And why me? Why not some other girl? (*Turns to* Ber.) Well, rearrange things. . . . Just for me, Ber! Let happiness touch me, too. Can't you? If you can't I'll laugh at you. Where am I going to be in five or ten years? Will they bring it to me, that happiness of mine, when I'm half dead? (*Gloomily.*) Don't let them bring it to me, or I'll scream: "Give it to your dogs, I don't want it!"

Grandfather (*suddenly*). Boym is going away! Ho-hum! Flaps his wings and goes away! I had an uncle, once.

He's been dead a long time. A long time! . . . (*Trying to remember. Laughs.*) Can't remember a thing. . . . He's dead. Ho-hum! (*Trying to remember.*)

SONYA. Stop it, grandfather.

GRANDFATHER. Eh? What? Where's Boym? Will he come to say good-bye to me?

SONYA. He will, grandfather; just keep still for a minute.

GRANDFATHER (*not hearing*). But I shan't see Boym any more. Ho-hum! When he comes back, I'll be in the ground. . . . And . . . it'll be good.

(DINA *comes in. She has come from the city. She is glum. Surveys the room. Takes off her coat.*)

DINA. Hasn't Boym gone yet? Dust and dirt everywhere! (*Picks up the cigarette boxes from the floor.*) And where's Eva? Has Eva gone crazy? Well, I'm going to talk to her.

BER. Why do you shout so, Dina? Say it quietly; we'll understand.

DINA. So you want me to sit down, fold my arms and sing with joy? I suppose I've got five hearts in my breast? One to dance, one to smile, one to sing, the fourth to play, and only the last little one to weep? And yet you expect me to understand everything, with one heart, with one soul?

SONYA (*in despair*). Evening's coming on! Where shall I hide? Where shall I go?

GRANDFATHER (*coming up to* DINA). How is it out now, Dina? Cold?

DINA. Get away from me, you useless good-for-nothing! Try to tell him about life outside! (*Picks up the papers from the floor.*) And I have to spend my life with that thing! . . .

GRANDFATHER (*frightened*). What? Well, then, never mind my asking. . . . (*Walks away from her and sits down.*)

BER (*to* DINA). I can't get used to you. Lord help you! (*Puts the basket on his shoulder and walks out.*)

DINA (*shouting after him*). And if everything goes wrong, Ber? Go on, tell me that some blind men want to lead a woman who can see, but that she won't let them.

SONYA (*in terror*). I know, mother; I know what you mean.

DINA. Then get dressed and go out! I've just come from there, and they're waiting for you. . . . No, I know you

don't want to. So then, what? Yes, what? They've been running after you all the week. Go on. No? Think of me. Why are you stubborn? Why don't you want to?

SONYA (*placatingly*). Don't ask me . . . to do . . . this . . . one thing, mother.

DINA. This thing? But what else can I ask you to do? Why, this is everything!

SONYA. I don't want to talk about it.

DINA. Then who will talk? Your father? That good-for-nothing can't do anything. . . . Every time I go into the store my heart bleeds. I can't even walk across the yard; everybody points a finger at me: Dina's pawning things. When Glank comes home, they say, "There goes that good-for-nothing husband of Dina's." And who's to blame? You are.

SONYA. Don't, mother, don't say it. . . . I can't do it.

DINA. Look here, Sonya! I'm just about ready to give you a licking. Now, you be careful!

SONYA. Lick me. . . . Yes, and kill me, if you want to, but I can't do it any more.

DINA (*shouting*). Then what can you do? What? Damn you!

SONYA (*stubbornly*). Nothing.

DINA (*shaking her*). Well, say something . . . say something! Are you dumb? (*Runs to the door and closes it. Hits her breast with her fist.*) I'll kill myself! I'll take a rope and hang myself! I can't bear this any longer! Why are you so stubborn? Say something! There are so many mouths to feed! Is Ber going to give us money much longer? And can he? What are you thinking of?

SONYA (*after a silence*). I've already told you that I'm not going there any more. Before I found out, I could. . . . But when I felt . . . Even if we all die, I *am not going to do it.* Don't ask me.

DINA. Sonya! I'll tear your eyes out! I'll twist your arms off!

SONYA. Kill me! . . . It would be better, much better!

DINA (*holding herself back*). No, I won't kill you, but you're going! You've got to go! What sort of a thing is a human being when he feels that he must live? Do *you* know?

He's a beast; he's a bird; he's a snake! And now, you're going! . . .

SONYA (*gently*). Why are you angry, mother? Am I not right? I've given you everything, and I've forgiven you for all the evil you've done me. Like an ox, I've bent my head and I've gone where you drove me. You've taken Arn away from me; you've told him about me. I submitted, didn't I? Didn't I forgive you? But when this happened, I suddenly felt, yes, I felt that I couldn't do it any more. Look at me; why, I'm going to be a mother! Have pity on me! This is all I have left. Don't touch it! (*As if in a dream.*) I shall be a mother, I shall be a mother! . . .

DINA. In one ear and out the other!

SONYA. I am going to have a child! Whose? I don't know. . . . But he is *mine!* And when I think of him my heart grows as hard as a rock! *My* child, *mine!* I dream of him at night. I talk to him, I confide in him; he answers me and says, "Don't, don't. . . . "

DINA (*dumfounded*). You are mad!

SONYA. And what kind of a child is he going to be? I know; yes, I do! You said, "Give up your purity!" I did, and I kept still. You said, "Forget Arn!" And Arn was no more. You tore two hearts to pieces and you didn't even draw a long breath. I didn't say a word. . . . Now *he's* coming. . . . Mother! . . . Have pity on both of us . . . on both of us!

(BOYM *and* EVA *come in.* DINA *shakes her finger at* SONYA.)

BOYM. We've had our tea and the things are all packed; everything's ready. And yet somehow I don't feel like saying good-bye. . . . (*Looks at his watch.*) I'll have to go in a few minutes. How long a few minutes can be . . . sometimes.

SONYA (*gloomily*). If I were you, I'd have gone long ago.

EVA (*softly*). It's not always so easy. . . . I understand. . . .

BOYM (*coming up to* DINA). Well, I'm going now. What are you going to wish me, Dina?

DINA (*glumly*). Nothing. Or, rather, I'll say I've more important things on my mind than you.

BOYM. So you are still angry. . . .

DINA. Remember me kindly, or don't. It's all the same to me.

BOYM. Couldn't you give me a smile . . . just this last time?

DINA. I haven't time to think of you, Boym. I have curses on my tongue, and in my heart there's despair. What am I to say to you? You're going away? It's all right for you, but not for me. Perhaps where you're going you'll find another Dina. (*Turns away.*) What shall I say? Well, when you get where you're going, tell them that it's very bad here, so bad that even God can't do more than pity us. . . . Tell them that it's dark here . . . daytime and nighttime . . . that people kill each other because they're hungry; that poverty cuts people off like dead grass. . . . Tell them that we bear the weight of mountains on our shoulders. . . . Tell them . . . (*Begins to weep.*)

SONYA. Mother, mother, what are you doing? Why do you hurt me so?

DINA. I can't stand it any longer! Here! He may be glad; but we . . . but we . . . (*Makes a hopeless gesture and goes out.*)

BOYM (*guiltily*). Your mother's right, Sonya. And I'm just a little ashamed. . . . I'm glad, and yet I'm ashamed of my joy. I feel guilty. But all the same, Sonya, I feel glad, happy. In an hour I'll be far away from this city, from these accursed places. I shan't have to read in the morning about people frozen on the streets, about hungry suicides; I shan't hear the cries of people being murdered, or of the weeping, or of the cursing. Tomorrow I shall see new lands and happy people. . . . I shall feel glad, Sonya! Can you forgive me?

EVA. Why talk about it, Boym? Can't you see what's in our hearts? Be quiet; don't say anything.

SONYA. We forgive you.

BOYM. I'll think of you often and of the people who are shouting here, Sonya! I want you to know that even in joy there's sorrow and . . . shame.

SONYA (*vexed*). Really? Then where's your sorrow? . . . No, you don't understand. What's the use of my listening to you? Look around! Yes, look around!

BOYM (*confused*). I . . . I don't see anything.

EVA. Stop, Sonya. A man who is blind to the things so

close to him is wonderful, absolutely wonderful. Is life so pleasant down below? No, let that which gladdens me, which holds my hope in its hand, my happiness, let it soar over me, let it fly upwards. I am going to strive upwards. . . .

SONYA (*gloomily*). Good-bye, Boym.

BOYM (*excited*). I don't know what you're talking about. Don't be angry, Sonya. We may never see each other again. . . . If you're angry with me, please forgive me.

EVA. Never! . . .

SONYA. No one can hold a grudge against you for long! You're just blind. But it has to be so. Human beings are given hearts so that they can break from sorrow. Let it break! . . .

BOYM (*with joy*). How glad I am that everything is cleared up, Sonya, that you all love me. When I've gone, you'll remember Boym who used to play the fiddle. As soon as I cross the border I'm going to write you a letter; an enthusiastic one.

SONYA. And what will happen to us, tomorrow? What will happen here?

(BER *comes in.*)

BER. Look at your watch, Boym. I think it's time.

BOYM. I got talking and forgot that I was going away. (*Looks at his watch.*) Yes, it will be time soon. Have I left anything here? (SONYA *and* BER *leave, unnoticed.*)

EVA. Boym, you're going away, and I want to tell you . . .

BOYM (*absent-mindedly*). Yes, what? Here, I forgot this music . . .

EVA. I wanted to tell you that I'm staying behind alone . . .

BOYM (*rolling up the music*). What do you mean by "alone"? Your relatives are with you . . .

EVA (*impatiently*). I shall be alone (*lifts a finger*), like a finger. . . . (BOYM *comes close to her.*) And no help, none at all! I've always tried to reach for everything good, everything kind, and nothing came of it. I'm a failure! But it doesn't frighten me any more, Boym. My useless life . . .

BOYM (*absent-mindedly*). Yes, it's rotten here. . . .

EVA (*laughs.* BOYM *echoes her*). How can anyone talk to you? You're only interested in yourself. But it's all

right; I don't mind. It's all right, I suppose . . . I've nothing more to say. . . . But there is one request I want to make of you, Boym. When you're walking those plazas, flooded with light, those gorgeous streets, when you're in a crowd of happy people, remember that somewhere there's a girl, Eva, and that she's thinking about you and rejoices for your sake. Promise, Boym!

BOYM (*with ardor*). I shall remember, I shall most certainly remember about you. I shall think: What a pity that Eva isn't here! I shall write to you.

EVA (*sadly*). No, don't write. When you're gone, night will settle over me, and nobody will be able to lighten the darkness. Good luck! . . .

BOYM. How shall I say good-bye to you? I would have been best to play something. But it's too late, my violin's packed.

EVA. Good-bye, good-bye! . . .

BOYM. Yes, Eva. (*Sighing slightly.*) So be it, I am going away from you. In this room everything was born. I feel sad, somehow. I'm leaving a part of my soul right here. My ghost will wander here when I'm gone. (*Silence.*) Well, it's time!

(SONYA, DINA, GRANDFATHER, BER *and* GLANK *come in.* GLANK *wears his overcoat.*)

GLANK. All the neighbors have collected at the gate. I even got scared. I thought, What's this, a fire? Where? Whose house? And why not? And what's a fire, after all? A match, a bit of carelessness. . . . (*Laughs good-humoredly*). And all because Boym's going away!

DINA. Don't talk so much, Glank. No occasion for merriment; it's no wedding, you know.

BOYM (*to* BER). Well, let's start, Ber. Good luck, Dina.

BER. The suitcase and the basket are already in the carriage. (*Goes out.*)

BOYM. Good-bye, Glank. Dina, won't you give me a smile?

DINA. Good-bye, Boym. I can't smile now.

BOYM. Have it your own way. . . . You're right. Good luck to you. God give you a happy and cheerful life.

GLANK. I want to do something for you, Boym. And why shouldn't I do something for you? Why not, after all?

Give me your violin and I'll carry it for you. (*Takes the violin and runs out.*)

Boym. Good-bye, Sonya. May God grant you happiness.

Sonya. I don't like you. . . . You're blind, blind.

Boym (*laughing*). But there I'll begin to see, I'll see everything. I'm going to write to you, you dear, proud girl. Good-bye, Eva.

Eva. Good-bye, Boym! Forever! Well, all right, all right.

Boym. And grandfather! He's the one person I can embrace with real pleasure! (*Embraces him.*) Good-bye, grandfather.

Grandfather. What? Good-bye, good-bye! You'll come back presently, but I'll be in my grave. Ho-hum! Well, may God make it soon! I'll be satisfied . . .

Dina. Stop it, grandfather. (*Everybody goes out except* Grandfather *and* Eva.) Here, take this out. (*Gives him a little table.*) Earn your bread and don't chatter! Useless! Still living . . . Forgot when to die! (*To* Eva.) Where are you going?

Eva. I want to see him off . . .

Dina. Is that so! D'you suppose I'd let you go now? So that everybody'll see you crying!

Eva. I'm not going to cry, mother . . . or to laugh, either. Let me . . .

Dina. No! Stay right here. (*Mocking.*) "I'm not going to cry!" I'll show you how to cry. Thank God, Boym's gone. Now I'm going to talk to *you.*

Eva. It won't make any difference what you say, mother. Nothing can move me now. Why, I'm worse than a stone, less than a stone. Just let me take one more look. . . . (*Runs to the window.*)

Dina (*catching her*). No, no, neither the door, nor the window. You stay right here. Here, I say! I'll break you . . . just wait!

Eva (*looking at her with horror. In a frozen voice*). I'm not afraid of anything you say any more, mother. I'm not afraid any more . . . All right, hold me! I look at you and I think: Why was I ever afraid of you? Whom was I afraid of? And yet I was scared almost to death. (*Steps back*

from her.) Are you my mother? You, my mother? No, you're not my mother!

DINA. That's nothing to me, Eva. Shout, if you want to! But I am standing higher, looking farther. I've risen above everything and I look around me. What are joys, sorrows, love, when there's nothing to live on, when we're all suffocating? A corpse fell in love with another corpse . . . You make me laugh!

EVA (*stuffing her ears*). I won't listen to you any longer. A sort of night has settled down on me. Where are you? What are you? There's nothing! I'm alone, all alone. . . .

DINA (*trying to pull* EVA's *hands from her ears*). You shall listen! You shall! I . . .

EVA (*escaping from her*). Don't touch me. . . . I won't be afraid of you . . . I'm not afraid of you.

DINA. I'll take you by the hair and drag you out of the house. Go earn your keep!

EVA. You're pushing me to the wall, mother! But there's no place to go beyond the wall. I'll smash my head first. I'll smash my head. What's going to stop me? Look into my heart. What do you matter, or your house, or poverty, when there's nothing left in my heart. . . .

DINA. You make me laugh!

EVA. Laugh, then! But don't cry over me when I am dead. Don't pollute my body with your tears. Don't come near me, or I shall rise and call on God to curse you. You, a mother? You! No, you're the horror of mankind! . . .

DINA. Nice, pretty words, pretty words! He taught you pretty words. . . . But the deeds, show me the deeds! Did he fall in love with you? You fool, you couldn't even manage that.

EVA. You want to warm yourself with my shame! Never! Never!

DINA. Yes, your shame! I want to. . . . I'll change you all into gold, into silver, and I'll laugh. You fool! And Glank, too, will laugh. . . . And Sonya will laugh. . . . It'll be quiet, warm, cozy around, and from you will pour gold and silver. . . .

EVA. I wish other girls were as calm as I am!

DINA. And how can they be calm? Someone frightful,

higher than we, gives orders. . . . He orders! Go out on the street and take a look. . . . Thousands of girls run after men, pleading, calling; there's nothing but bread left in the city.

EVA. Tell it to somebody else. . . .

DINA. Then keep still. And don't move. I'll shoot you out like an arrow. Where are you going to fly to, where will you land?

(SONYA, GLANK *and* GRANDFATHER *come in.* SONYA *casts a quick glance at* EVA.)

GLANK. Well, and now Boym is gone. The room feels more lonesome! Isn't it so, Dina? (*Takes off his overcoat.*)

DINA (*tidying up the room*). Brighter!

SONYA (*in a dull voice*). Sadder. . . .

GLANK (*surveying the walls*). Look how many nails there are on this wall! Dina darling, come here for a minute! Eva, where's my hammer?

DINA. Started already, found your work. . . . Don't touch the nails, let them be. They're not your business!

SONYA (*sad and annoyed*). Again! (*To* DINA.) What are you shouting at him for?

DINA. Then kiss him, your fine father. Kiss this good-for-nothing!

GLANK (*humbly*). When I was making four thousand a year you used to kiss me. I looked handsome and fine to you then.

DINA. I could tear my lips out when I remember it. I kissed you. . . . Take a look at yourself!

GLANK (*timidly*). But I spend all my time thinking how I can please you, Dina darling. . . . What does it mean, to please someone? Why, to please them! To make them laugh, to make them want to speak cheerfully. I think, but I can't think up anything. . . . Eight years ago, when I was making four thousand a year, you used to laugh. And I didn't have to do anything to make you! . . .

DINA. Because then you were a man; you didn't sneak around the room like a thief, with a hammer in your hand. Because you were useful. And now you're useless, no good to anyone, like the rest of your family. Are you human beings? There isn't a spark of fire in any one of you? It's my joy to try to wake up a lot of dead, sleepy, useless people. . . .

SONYA (*wearily*). Give us a minute's peace, mother. Just think, you torment us all day long, all day long. Now Boym's gone. It seems joyless somehow, lonesome. . . .

DINA. And I suppose you expect me to sit down and break into tears because Boym's gone? You're useless, all of you! Eva, you and grandfather bring the table in from the dining room. We've got to work now; perhaps it'll be merrier, cozier. (EVA *and* GRANDFATHER *go out.* GLANK *surreptitiously fusses around the wall. Looks over the nails, tries to pull out a few. Seeing that* DINA *is watching him, he jumps away from the wall.*)

GLANK. It's nothing, Dina darling, it's nothing at all. . . .

DINA. I wish your hands would rot off! Help me move the bed. (EVA *and* GRANDFATHER *bring in the table.*) And where's the tablecloth — the chairs? (*Puts the bed by the other wall.* GLANK *fusses around. He tries to be of some use.*) Sit down somewhere, Glank; you're in my way. Now it's nice here again, like last year. (*Sits down by the table.*)

GLANK (*sitting down beside her*). Yes, it's nice, Dina darling. (*Innocently.*) I'd like to have some tea, Dina. I really don't know why, but all of a sudden I feel like having some.

DINA (*in a frozen voice*). Where am I going to get tea? I might give you some poison.

GLANK. Oh, don't be angry. Don't mind me, I really didn't say anything. You'd think I'd never seen or drunk tea in my life. Nonsense!

(EVA *goes out.* GRANDFATHER *sits down on the bed and falls asleep.*)

SONYA (*sitting down by the table*). It's hard even to imagine that Boym lived here. He's gone, and it seems as if he'd never been here, as if he'd never lived at all. He's far away from this city by now.

GLANK. Most likely he's sitting in the railroad car, poor fellow, and feeling lonesome. Or thinking of what we're doing now. Or he's opened the basket, poor fellow, and is eating. Yes, eating. You know, Dina darling, it looks like I too am a little bit hungry. (*Frightened by her glance.*) No, I'm not hungry; I was just joking.

SONYA. No, he feels lonesome. He sits like this, with

his head on his hand, and he feels sad, just as I do. And he stares straight ahead and sees this room: in a moment Eva will come in!

DINA (*annoyed*). It's about time you stopped talking about Boym. I'm tired of hearing his name. Boym! Boym! (*To* GLANK.) Did you make anything today, Glank?

GLANK (*with assurance*). Not a penny. What's the odds? Why, have I any goods to sell? Or am I selling my old legs that nobody wants? Or this beard that scares everybody away? It's no use asking. Oh, Dina, an old man would be better off dead. . . .

DINA. Why don't you die, then? Are you going to live to be a hundred, like grandfather? A fine father and a fine son! If I were you, I'd walk up to the wall and smash my head against it, and end things.

(ELKA *appears in the entrance.* SONYA *sees her.*)

SONYA. Here's Elka! Come in! What are you standing in the doorway for?

DINA (*angrily*). You here already? Much I need your tears! Driving *her* crazy, too. Get out!

ELKA (*runs to the door, terrified*). What's the matter with you, Dina?

SONYA. Elka! Stay here.

DINA. Get out of here! You crazy fool! Flooding my house with tears. As if anybody'd sent for her. Gets a lot of tears devil knows where and brings 'em here!

SONYA (*rising*). Elka! I say, stay!

GLANK (*running from one to the other*). Why quarrel? And what are quarrels, anyway? I'm asking you, Dina, and I'm asking you, Sonya, and you, Elka. You're a good girl. . . . Go in peace. Don't you see how it is here? All sick people here! . . .

SONYA. But why does she interfere? Why does she make life miserable for everybody? . . .

DINA. I wish I were dead! (*Suddenly, to* ELKA.) Look at our life, Elka. I want some sympathy. I rise high, I see everything. My brain is in a fever. . . . But they . . . the people I must live with . . . What are they? Good-for-nothings! One, two, three, all good-for-nothings. People out of the grave, flabby brains, lazy hearts. . . .

GLANK (*frightened*). Now I'm afraid of you, Dina darling! Stop, please! Sonya, I'm afraid of her.

SONYA (*in despair*). Go, Elka. You see for yourself. . . . Why waste words? What's the good of complaining?

ELKA. I'll go. . . . I'm afraid of you, Dina. . . . Next month is Arn's wedding. You shout, and grandmother cries. . . . Oh, my poor head, my poor head! (*Goes out.*)

SONYA. Arn's wedding is next month. . . . What do you say to that, mother? Everything is just lovely, everything is just rosy. (*They sit in a gloomy mood.*)

GLANK. But I was going to say that I'm hungry; yes, hungry. (*Frightened.*) Not very hungry, really, Dina darling, but I could eat something.

DINA. Tell it to the wall.

GLANK. I don't understand it. Before this, we used to have dinner and supper every day. Where is it now? We had tea whenever we felt like it. And there was happiness in every corner. What does the word mean: "happiness"? Real happiness!

DINA (*angrily*). Please, Glank; stop tormenting me. Talk to the walls. . . . Don't ask me. You can go to bed on an empty stomach.

GLANK. I'm not really saying anything. If there's no supper, then that simply means that there's no supper, and you must know why. A man wants to eat. Well, that can't be helped. He'll get over it . . . What is bread, anyway? Bread is bread. Only I'd just like to know why we haven't any bread any more? I wasn't earning anything before this. Isn't that true, Dina darling? Well, what does it all mean, then? If I didn't earn anything before, and yet there was supper and there was dinner, why isn't it the same way now? Either we shouldn't have had anything to eat before, or there should be something now, too. The question is: What does it all mean?

DINA. Don't bother to figure it out. You can't. Please, Glank, don't talk to me. I'm boiling, my anger's ready to spill over. Shut up and sit quietly. Don't let me even hear you breathe.

GLANK (*rising timidly*). I've shut my mouth already.

No speaking, no breathing. Dina darling, aren't we really going to have any supper?

SONYA (*gloomily*). Leave her alone, father.

GLANK. No longer, no longer. I'm no longer hungry; I don't want to eat; I'm silent.

DINA. You, too, keep quiet, Sonya! My anger's ready to spill over. (*Turns away from her. To* GLANK.) Everybody is asking *me*. . . . Why me? Did you think all that food was falling from heaven? You thought so? God stood over us and was pouring soup generously into our plates, tea into our cups. . . . Oh, you good-for-nothing! . . .

GLANK. I know I don't amount to much, Dina darling. Yes, yes, I hardly count at all. . . . But let's have quiet! . . .

SONYA (*to* DINA). That's enough. . . . Stop, mother . . .

(EVA *appears in the door.*)

GLANK (*to* DINA). I beg you, Dina darling. I'm full already, I'm not hungry any more. (*Takes her hand.*)

DINA (*snatching her hand from him*). Go away! I'm suffocating! To be blamed by everyone and not to have anybody obey me. To drag boats on dry land and to haul carriages in water — that seems to be my job. I'm tired of it. I'll keep still only if you fall on your knees before me and beg me to forgive you. No? No! (*Sarcastically.*) You want your supper, Glank? I want mine, too. . . . Let's get down on our knees before Sonya. . . . Let's plead with her: "Go, they're waiting for you, Sonya! You'll bring gold and silver, and then there'll be supper."

SONYA (*terrified*). Mother, mother, keep still!

GLANK (*stunned*). What did you say, Dina? (*Seizes her by the arm. Trembles.*) Dina darling, what did you say? What? Sonya? My Sonya? My crown? (*Cries out.*)

DINA. Let's beg her, "Sonya, Sonya darling!"

(EVA *cries out. Runs to* SONYA.)

EVA. Sonya! You . . . Is this true? No, it's not true! Sonya darling, what have you done? (GRANDFATHER *jumps up and looks around with terror.*)

GLANK (*running to* SONYA *and embracing her*). Sonya darling! What? My pride, my crown . . . (*Strikes his head.*) I wish my heart would break! I can't bear this! Sonya darling! (*Falls down at her feet.*) I've eaten your bread,

your bread. Kill me! Everybody kill me! Why should I live? . . .

SONYA (*weeping*). Father, what are you doing? Poor, dear father! . . .

DINA. Silence! What's the use of crying? (*With contempt, to* GLANK.) You're crying? When were you a man? Get off your knees! Look at me. . . . I say there's nothing terrible in this. Life says, "Bend down!" and we bend, and we crawl on our knees. Look, Glank, there's just a small handful of us. The whole world is marching against us. Let's draw our sword against it, the sword of our wits. . . . We're surrounded by wild beasts. Let us meet them. . . . Let us look at them straight and then laugh at them. They shout, "You know the truth; tell us the truth!" We'll tell them the truth. "You have Sonya; give us Sonya!" We'll give her. They shout, "You have Eva; give us Eva!" We'll give her! We'll give them everything, everything; but in return we shall buy life! So get off your knees, Glank, get up! (GLANK *and* SONYA *weep.*)

EVA (*coming close to* DINA). Fine speech! You did it! You turned her poor head! But don't you see that this is the end of us? (*For a moment steps back from her with terror.*) Who are you? Who are you? Let me look in your eyes! Who are you? You sold Sonya! Sonya! The proud Sonya! No one knew. . . . We ate bread washed in the blood and tears of shame, and you kept silent. And you didn't tell us! Who are you, then? And you're driving me there, too. . . . Who are you, then, who are you? (*Surprised.*) And *I* was afraid of *you?* (*Advances on her.*)

DINA. Take her away! She's gone mad!

EVA (*in a daze*). I'm going to ask you something else. . . . But it doesn't matter. Our end has come. You shouldn't live! Disappear! Let people forget your face; don't let them remember that a beast lived on earth and that it was called Dina. Die!

SONYA (*crying out*). Let her be, Eva! Look what she's doing! Father, I forgive her all, all! Mother, here I am crying, but I don't blame you for it! I forgive. . . .

GLANK (*weeping*). But what shall I do? Eva, Sonya darling, my little ones, my joys! . . .

DINA (*holding* EVA's *hands*). I'll tie you up, I'll beat

you. You'll crawl on your knees before me. I'll bend your head and stick it in the mud.

Eva (*pleading*). Don't live on. . . . Please. It's much better that you should not live. No, no! Who, who are you? Who are you? (*Quickly frees herself from* Dina's *hands. Seizes a knife from the table and waves it threateningly.*)

Dina (*horrified*). Hold her, hold her! (Grandfather *shouts.*)

Eva (*throwing down the knife on the floor*). What have I done? What have I wished to do! (*Falls in the chair, next to the table.*) Sonya, Sonya! . . . (*Sobs passionately.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV

Irregularly shaped room. One window gives on the street, the other on the yard. The shutters are closed. One door. The room is divided in two with a curtain. Furnishings the same as in Act II. The chest of drawers and two armchairs are missing. Evening. Grandfather *is sitting in a corner, napping.* Sonya *paces the room. Holds a baby in her arms. She feels cramped in the room, where it is uncomfortable for her to walk. She stumbles over chairs.* Dina *sits on the couch and watches her gloomily.*

Sonya. What are you complaining of all the time, my precious? No one must know you were born. . . . (*Kisses the baby.*) My love! . . .

Dina (*gloomily*). Isn't it about enough, Sonya? What is it, after all? Just a piece of flesh!

Sonya. I love him so. . . . And I tremble all over. I could give my life for these little eyes. My love! . . . My darling! . . . (*To* Dina.) I have hard luck all the time — when will it change? Is my good luck asleep? My good luck's asleep, and nobody'll wake it up. . . .

Dina (*gloomily*). And I say, that's enough! Put him down. Right away! . . . Don't argue with me, don't cry. . . . Four months this curse has been hanging over our heads. Look what's become of us, where we are living! Even my

kitchen was more cheerful, nicer, brighter than here. And because of whom? Because of him! Everything lost because of this lump of flesh. . . .

SONYA. No, no, mother. He's not to blame; I am, I! Whom can he harm? Don't curse him! Him? Don't curse! When he cries or lies quietly or sleeps, I have just one thought. And it's about him. And when I kiss him or swaddle him, I'm so happy that I catch my breath and I'm willing to endure and suffer even more, if it will help him. And when he opens his little eyes, I'm in heaven, in heaven. . . .

DINA (*turning away*). I hate him. . . .

SONYA (*pleading*). Look at him! Mother, he was born, and right away I became kinder. Pity swells up in me whenever I look at him . . . and my hands tremble with happiness and my eyes are blind with tears. (*Brings the baby to her.*) Take him in your arms, take him. . . .

DINA (*angrily*). Take him out of my sight! . . .

SONYA (*walking away; meekly*). Well, it's all right. I won't argue, I'll be still. I see everything and I accept your word. Yes, yes, you're right. You know the truth, you understand it. But one more day, mother . . . make me a present of one more day. . . .

DINA. I've made you a present of the whole week. What for? It'll soon be nine, and I'll go to fetch Mashki. Everything will be over, and we'll be able to raise our heads again.

SONYA (*trembling*). Today? Now? Mother, don't! Don't! . . . Perhaps tomorrow, or, at least, not till tonight.

DINA. No, no. It's no use talking.

SONYA (*pleading*). One more night. I'll put him at my breast and I'll weep. I'll feel satisfied. I'll think that years have passed, that he's grown up, and then I shall let him go. I shall tell him how much I love him and how it aches here, right here. . . . I shall borrow strength from him. . . . (*Weeps.*)

DINA (*listening*). Stop crying. Somebody's coming. (*Steps are heard.* SONYA *quickly goes behind the curtain.* BER *comes in.*)

BER. Good evening, Dina. I thought I heard someone crying here.

DINA. Who would be crying here? Maybe next door?

BER (*sitting down*). Maybe next door. . . . And where's Glank?

DINA. Asleep. He's been running about the whole day. We had to sell some of the things. Glank's asleep.

BER (*looking at the curtain*). And Sonya is still sick? I'd like to take a look at her, but I suppose I can't. I miss Sonya. (*Loudly.*) Good evening, Sonya! I have good news for you. Soon everything is going to be all right. . . .

SONYA (*behind the curtain*). Good evening, Ber. I'm glad you came.

BER. How do you feel? Getting better?

SONYA (*after a silence*). Yes! I feel better.

DINA. She'll get up tomorrow, and we'll begin looking for new quarters.

BER. It is pretty bad here. (*Shakes his head.*) Whenever I come here, I pound on the wrong door. Can't forget where you used to before.

DINA (*sighing*). It was fine there. I even miss Boym now, when I think back.

BER (*pensively*). Boym . . . wonder where he is now. And Eva was still alive. . . . Somehow it was different there, Dina! And only four months ago.

SONYA. Don't remind me of Eva, Ber. . . . I'll be crying in a minute.

DINA (*sternly*). I've forgotten her. I have no time to remember.

SONYA. I think of Eva and I remember my poor Elka. Oh, Ber! That house was always unlucky. Elka died; Eva cut her throat; I lost everything, everything. . . . (*Sound of weeping is heard.*)

BER (*tenderly*). Don't, Sonya. What for? Don't. . . .

DINA. Crying again? Stop crying. Look at me. Am I crying? Something is screaming inside me, but I don't listen to it. Let it scream! Something is weeping inside me; I don't listen. Let it weep!

BER (*conciliatingly*). Now, that's enough, Dina. See, you're shouting already.

SONYA. But I am crying! No one's as strong as you are, mother.

DINA. But you've got to be! You may have to cut out

your heart, but you've got to be strong. Or do you want to lie down on the ground and crawl like a worm? Do you?

BER (*softly*). Like a human being . . .

DINA (*impatiently*). But I don't want to! Ber, when a living human being is drowning, you've got to stop talking. . . . You've got to burn up all words, all words in the flame of the heart. . . .

BER (*reluctantly*). You're always arguing with me. What shall I say? (*Lost in thought.*) Well, all right. Look here, Dina. There's a tree! A tall, big, green tree, with many branches. It's come out of the earth. And now look, at the top. . . . There's a bird sitting and singing. Yes, singing! Why does it sing, Dina? And why is the tree green and beautiful? (*Smiles tenderly.* DINA *is silent. She turns away.*)

SONYA. Why, Ber, why?

BER. Why, who else is there to praise everything here below, Sonya? Who, Dina? The bird sings as the tree grows; the tree grows as the rain falls; and the rain falls as the animals run. Everyone praising, everyone rejoicing. But isn't man even higher? What then? What does it mean? Why, it means that life may be dreadful here now, but that it will be splendid; that it simply has got to be all right. The bird says it will be all right, and the animals that run say it will be all right. It's got to be this way here below. . . . And do you mean to tell me that a human being won't have faith! Listen carefully! Somewhere they're knocking already. It's a glorious knock! Do you hear? Somewhere they're already talking. It's splendid talk! Do you hear? Then rejoice! . . .

SONYA (*sadly*). When you talk about all this, Ber, I realize more than ever that Eva cut her throat. She couldn't endure this misery, Ber; she couldn't wait, and like a little lamb she lay down, drowning in her own blood. . . . And she used to shine like a star over all this dirt.

DINA (*impatiently*). I don't want to listen to you, Ber. Who are you? A messenger of joy, or God's archangel, whom I must believe? Or, perhaps, God himself, who makes joys and dispenses them? Well, then tell me, why must I stay here now? Do you know? No, you don't. Eva killed herself! I was watching her, and yet she killed herself. . . .

Why? Do you know that? Must I humbly bow my head all the time and not think or struggle?

BER. Then struggle! . . . You've got to struggle; but honestly, Dina. The main thing is, honestly! . . . (GRANDFATHER *wakes up and tries to hear the conversation.*)

DINA. Against whom? Who is our enemy? He, you, they? Do I know? And why honestly? What does "honestly" mean? To whom did I ever promise to be honest? If they strike me, did I promise not to hit back? What if I want to tear out the eyes of the One I can't see?

BER. You can't, Dina. You don't dare.

DINA. Why not? I'll tear out both eyes; I'll tear out ten of them, if there are that many. I want to live, I want to breathe. I want to see. . . . Here is the sun; it is my sun! Here is gold; it is my gold!

BER (*softly*). That is not true.

DINA. It is. I can . . . I can do everything. . . . Honesty, justice! I don't want to hear about them! What is justice? Whose justice? Did they call me in and did they say to me: "Dina, consent to our torturing you, ruining your life, keeping you in chains like a wild beast. . . . And you, Dina, must promise to suffer patiently. And this we'll call justice!" They didn't call me in; so stop talking nonsense, Ber. And if they had called me in? Who is the supreme authority for me in the world? I am! I'd have shouted to them, "Murderers! Hypocrites! I'm going to do the same thing that you are doing, for I want to live, just as much as you do!"

BER. You talk the way a wild beast would talk if it had the gift of speech.

DINA. And why should I talk like a human being, Ber? Who taught me that? And is a human being really better and everything human really higher? And what is it to be human, Ber? I ask you! To be cunning, to snarl at each other instead of speaking, always to curse and to envy, to be cruel, cruel, cruel? Aren't all these human things as we know them? Don't try to teach me, Ber! Justice? . . . I trample on it. Honesty? I spit on it! What's most to my benefit: that's the best honesty! My profit: that's the best justice! . . . (*Silence.*)

BER (*calmly*). Yes, Dina! There is a river in the city, and across it there is a bridge. . . . Different people used to

meet on that bridge. . . . But a storm destroyed the bridge. Now people stand on each side of the river, but they can no longer understand each other. They still hold out their hands to each other, they nod, they sigh, but there is no bridge any more. And who is going to build it again, Dina? You used to be a good, modest girl, Dina. Look, where are you now? The bridge is destroyed. . . . I stand and look at you from the other side. I shout to you across the river: "Listen to me, Dina, listen carefully!" It's no use: you can't hear me. . . .

SONYA (*extending her hands to* DINA *from behind the curtain*). Mother, mother, please! . . .

DINA. Leave me alone, Ber. (BER *rises and walks to her.*) Why, my whole life is within me and it is going to die with me. I'm not concerned about anything else. I haven't time to wait. I want everything from life right now.

BER. All the time — you, you! What are you, anyway? What is a person, a single person? (*Looks before him, in thought.* GRANDFATHER *comes close to* DINA *and takes her hand.*)

DINA (*startled*). What do you want?

GRANDFATHER (*slowly*). I was going to say, Dina. . . . Ho-hum! (*Laughs.*)

DINA (*with anger*). It's none of your business! Why do you butt in?

GRANDFATHER. What? Eh? (*Smiles.*)

DINA (*stepping back.*) When shall I get rid of you? You've been a dead weight on my shoulders for twenty years.

GRANDFATHER (*laughs*). Yes, ho-hum! You see, Dina, how it was in our home. . . . You see, Dina, my father . . .

DINA (*beside herself with anger. Shouting*). I tell you that you've been a millstone around my neck for twenty years. Do you hear? (*Shakes him.*) Do you hear?

GRANDFATHER. What's the matter with you, Dina? Dina!

SONYA (*from behind the curtain*). What are you shouting at grandfather for, mother?

DINA. None of your business. (*To* GRANDFATHER.) You won't let us live, you useless thing. . . . I'm feeding you, so keep quiet.

BER. I know why you're shouting, Dina. Well, I'm here. Take your anger out on me.

GRANDFATHER (*gesticulating*). Am I touching you, Dina? I was just sitting here, remembering my father . . . wanted to tell you about it. . . . I don't touch anyone, Dina. . . . Hohum! Sitting, sleeping. And when not sleeping, whispering, "Lord, take me!" And I don't eat much, a bird eats more than I. And I don't take up much room, sleeping on the floor. . . .

DINA (*confused*). Why do you all attack me? (*Looks around.*) What do you all want of me? (*Suddenly shouts at* GRANDFATHER.) And can't you die? Can't you stretch yourself on the floor once and for all, so that they'll take you to the cemetery? Can't you? Tell me!

GRANDFATHER (*shaking with fear*). What do you want me to do, Dina? What did I say? And if I just can't die? And if God refuses to take me to him?

DINA. I don't care. Make him take you.

SONYA (*pleading*). Stop, mother. I'll scream, I'll start crying.

GRANDFATHER. You've tormented me to death, Dina. You torment me every day, but what can I do? I'm old! And why do you torment me? I'm afraid to cross the room. Well, I'm old, I don't know anything any more. I've forgotten how to pray, my eyesight is poor. Am I to blame for living so long? But if I simply can't die? What am I to do? (*Weeps.*) I can't die. . . . I ask God, but he refuses! . . . And you ought to be ashamed, Dina. May God forgive you for tormenting an old man. You'll be old yourself some day, you'll remember me.

BER. You are ashamed, Dina. . . . I can see, you're ashamed.

DINA. You won't soften me. I've seen tears before. (*To* GRANDFATHER.) Go along to your son, go! . . .

BER. No, I can't bear to see this. What has happened to you, Dina? What have you come to? And this is that same Dina, that lovely girl! . . . I can't bear to see you like this. I won't come here any more. May God help you!

DINA. Don't come, then. I won't miss you. I've seen all kinds of people, good and bad. I know them all. We'll get along without people.

GRANDFATHER (*approaching* DINA *timidly*). You aren't angry with me any more, are you? Please, don't. God is

merciful; I may die soon. Why, what am I, anyway? An old dog on the street. Please, let the old dog die. Don't strike it, don't drive it away.

DINA. Get out of my sight. I won't forgive you twenty years of my wasted life.

BER. Good-bye, Sonya. Tell your father to drop in at my place. Oh, how rotten it is here!

SONYA (*from behind the curtain*). I'm used to it. . . . Only, don't forsake me altogether. Of course, it's bad; couldn't be any worse, but you're still a small consolation. You'll drop in, Ber, chat with father, talk to grandfather, and I shall feel better. Don't desert us, Ber.

BER. I don't know, Sonya. . . . I'll see.

DINA (*to* GRANDFATHER). Go into that room, grandfather, and stay there. Don't come out until I call you, do you hear?

GRANDFATHER. What? Oh, all right, Dina, all right. (*Walks out with* BER.)

SONYA. Ber, give me your word. I'll be worrying otherwise.

DINA (*mocking her*). "Ber, Ber!" Ber is gone.

SONYA (*coming out*). Gone? Too bad! There was one good man, and you drove him away.

DINA. Any objections? (*Somewhere a clock strikes nine.* DINA *listens.*) Nine o'clock. I am going after Mashki. (*Puts on her coat.*)

SONYA (*pleading*). Mother, mother, can't you wait until tomorrow morning? I'm asking you for only one night. You've broken me completely. You've destroyed me entirely. And I can't struggle with you, and I haven't the words. Take pity on me! . . .

DINA (*coldly*). Don't bother me! (*Puts on her coat.*)

SONYA (*falling to the floor before her*). Take pity on me. After all, you are my mother. . . . Yes, you are my mother. I kiss your hands, I hug your feet.

DINA. It won't help, Sonya. And it wouldn't help even if I tried to persuade myself. I'm not breaking you, I'm breaking our fate. (*She is about to go.*)

SONYA (*holding her*). You won't look at me? Then listen to my voice; try to have sympathy. I've submitted to you in everything. What did it lead to? I used to be proud,

but I'm not any more. (*Weeps.*) Why am I living? Eva could find enough courage to kill herself. Why can't I? I can't part with this accursed life! (*Becomes confused.*) Where are you leading me, mother? . . . You've taken away my purity, then my love, then my baby. . . . Where will it end? Oh, give him back to me; make me a present of him. . . .

DINA. Let go of me. Do you hear? Let go of me right away! (*Tears herself away and goes out.*)

SONYA. Mother, mother! . . . (*Kneels and looks about confusedly. Slowly rises and goes behind the curtain. Returns holding the baby. Sits down. Looks at him, weeps softly. Kisses him.* GLANK *comes in. He is in his shirt sleeves, without a collar. His face is sleepy, beard unkempt. Before entering, he timidly looks into the room.*)

GLANK. I've certainly slept enough. What does that mean, "slept enough", and who made me? I made myself. (*Yawns.*) But what am I going to do at night? Beat my head against the wall? Living like a madman, turning day into night, night into day. . . . Where's mother, Sonya?

SONYA (*stops weeping*). Not far off. She'll be back right away.

GLANK (*sitting down*). That's all right, let her come. (*Yawns.*) And what dreams I have! I never used to have dreams like that before. Devils . . . mad dogs running after me. . . . (*Sighs.*) Even in sleep there's no relief, Sonya. Why is it so rotten?

SONYA (*softly*). I don't know. And who does?

GLANK. Nobody. (*Yawns.*) If only Ber would drop in.

SONYA. Ber was here and left.

GLANK. He was? When? Why didn't you wake me up? What am I going to do now? A long evening, a long night. . . . (*Rises, yawns.*) What am I to do? (*Goes to the window and opens a shutter.*) It's dark in the street. The lights in the windows shine. And why is it, Sonya, that when I see the lights in the window at night, it always seems to me that life in there is splendid? Splendid. What does that mean — "splendid"? Splendid, of course, is splendid. But what does it mean — this "splendid"? If it's something that makes people laugh, then why am I so sad? And if it can make a person sad, then what kind of a "splendid" is it?

The question is: What does it all mean? (*Stands perplexed.*)

SONYA. Don't torment me. I don't want to listen to you; I feel like crying when you talk.

GLANK (*closing the shutter*). Then I'll talk about something else. I've already forgotten that other thing, don't remember it, not thinking about it. (*With a mysterious air.*) Look here, Sonya darling, when mother is not at home I get more courage, somehow. What does that really mean — "more courage"? It means I'm not afraid of anybody. I'll dance if I want to. Dance? What does that mean — "dance"? Does it really mean gaiety? If being gay means dancing, then why don't all gay people dance? Or if anybody dances, does it mean he is gay? The question is: What does it all mean?

SONYA. Come here, father. Take a look at my baby.

GLANK. I'll come, though I don't feel like it. And why shouldn't I come if Dina won't see? (*Goes to her, notices a nail on the wall.*) Look, Sonya darling, a nail! . . . Where's my hammer? (*Walks up to the wall. Pensively.*) When I drive a nail in the wall or in a chair or some other place, I feel as if I'd destroyed some evil. There'll be one evil less on earth. Where's my hammer? When Eva was alive . . .

SONYA (*sadly and reproachfully*). Now you've started about Eva. . . .

GLANK. I won't; I've stopped already. . . . See, there are tears in my eyes. Sonya, I can't think of her without crying. She stands before me as if she were alive. (*Suddenly.*) Eva, Eva, why did you kill yourself? Why?

SONYA. Perhaps it was the best thing she could do.

GLANK. The world's become a lonesome place without Eva. . . . (*Repeats.*) The world's become a lonesome place without Eva. . . .

SONYA (*coming up to him*). Please, please stop, father. Here's my baby. Look at him. What eyes he has! Fix him in your memory. Kiss him. (*Weeps. Both sit down.* GLANK *strokes her head.*)

GLANK (*looking at the baby; pensively*). And here I am a grandfather already! How did it happen? There was no wedding, there was no joy, but I'm a grandfather. (*Kisses the baby, tickles his chin with his finger.*) What is a grand-

father, eh, boy? Grandfather means a grandfather who is not ashamed. You think I'm ashamed? I'm not; no, no!

SONYA (*gloomily*). But I must part with him. This is I. (*Points to the child.*) And I must throw myself away. Why? Mother wants it, she demands it.

GLANK. But why do you agree? Of course, I am afraid of her. What does that mean — "afraid"? But it's the truth. I really am afraid of her. When she looks at me, I begin to tremble. She trained me so that all at once my heart stops beating, my blood freezes, my pulse stops. . . . Yes, yes, I know I should have started in life with her differently, but it's too late now. But you mustn't. You should stand up and say to her sternly (*rises and says in a loud voice*): "What are you doing to me? This is not your child, it's mine. Who dares take a mother's child away from her and cast him away? Nobody!" (*Says in a softer voice.*) And what does that mean, "take a mother's child?" One can take it in order to kiss it or to put it to bed . . . (*Loudly again.*) "What kind of a mother are you if you take away my flesh from my flesh? Shed blood of my blood? And close the eyes of my eyes?" (*Softly again.*) And what does that mean — "eyes of my eyes"? Aren't these my eyes, too? . . .

SONYA (*weeping*). Oh, father, father . . .

GLANK (*hopelessly*). You can't; you can't, either? Well, if you want, we'll both of us run away from her. . . . We'll hide at the end of the world. . . . And I'll work. . . . (*Embraces her and says tenderly.*) I'll tell everybody that your child is mine! . . . You can't? Poor thing! We're both in the same boat. We're afraid of Dina. Dina holds us in her hands. . . . Well, we'll submit to her. Perhaps she's right? Perhaps her feet know the road to happiness. . . . Let her lead us.

SONYA. But where will he be? Where will his little bones be? (*Weeps. Long pause.* DINA *and* MASHKI *come in.* MASHKI *is of indeterminate age. She is alert and lively. She has a wheedling, laughing voice. Strangely dressed. At* MASHKI'S *entrance,* GLANK *arises, frightened, and begins to retreat.*)

DINA. Glank, you go in the other room. There's nothing here that concerns you.

GLANK. Yes, certainly; I will go, Dina. I've nothing to

do here. What does that mean — "nothing"? Why, really nothing. And she? . . . (*Points to* Mashki. *Looks her over distrustfully. Goes out slowly.*)

Dina. Well, here's Mashki, Sonya. She's a valuable woman.

Mashki (*running up to* Sonya). You're surely beautiful, you're a young woman, you're a fresh apple. . . . (*Shakes her head.*)

Sonya (*stepping back from her*). I'm afraid of her, mother!

Mashki (*quickly*). Who? Me? (*Long laughter.*) Mashki! Mashki? Where have you been all this time? Girls *like* Mashki. . . . Look at me. . . . (*Turns around.*) Just Mashki, nothing else! . . . (*Again laughs.*) As soon as I appear on the street, they all start shouting, "Mashki, Mashki, come here!" They shout here, "Come, Mashki!" They shout there, "Come, Mashki!" They shout everywhere, "Mashki!" . . . And I run here, and I run there, and Mashki to you, and Mashki to us. . . . (*Bursts out laughing.*) All the time: "Mashki, Mashki, Mashki." . . . (*To* Dina.) But where's the child?

Dina. Right away, right away. Sit down — for a moment. . . .

Mashki. No, no, no! . . . I have twenty irons in the fire. Where's the child?

Sonya. I'm afraid of her, mother! I tell you, I am afraid. Who is it you brought with you? (*Walks off with terror.*)

Mashki (*following her; shakes her head*). They're all the same. . . . Try to teach them. But listen, girl, the city can't live without Mashki. You don't believe me? (*Laughs boisterously.*) You don't? But who will dispose of a baby except Mashki, girl? And who will get a girl for the man who is looking for one? And who will buy what is not for sale? Who? Well, who? Mashki, Mashki, Mashki every time.

Dina. I'll swaddle him right away. Wait a moment, Mashki.

Sonya (*screaming*). No! No! (*Pleads.*) Don't, don't!

Mashki (*continuing*). And from everything gold pieces are born, girl. The gold pieces pour out, the gold pieces roll

out. . . . Gold whirls, gold rolls, gold shines in the sun, and I run and catch it. (*Laughs.*) Mashki! Here am I, Mashki! Here I am! (SONYA *sits down in a corner and looks at her gloomily.*)

DINA (*to* SONYA). Give him to me.

SONYA (*stubbornly*). I won't. . . . You can kill me, but I won't!

MASHKI (*coming close. Uncovers the child*). A boy?

SONYA (*screaming*). Don't touch him! . . .

MASHKI (*shrugging her shoulders*). They're all the same. . . . Why cry? There's no reason for crying! Aren't there enough children in the world? Children fall from the sky; children, children everywhere, getting in everybody's way. So many of them that a person doesn't know what to do with them. Better give him to me. Look, she really is crying.

DINA (*gloomily*). She'll stop. . . .

SONYA (*weeping*). I'm sorry for his little arms, his little legs. I've come to love him so much. . . .

MASHKI. Better give him to me! Let's have this little man. Love! What do you love, and what is there to love? (*Takes the baby from her.*) They're all the same. . . . And do you know how they part with the second one? With a laugh, girl! And how do they part with the third one? With dancing. . . . (*Wraps up the baby.*)

SONYA (*rising*). What are you doing with him? Mashki! Mashki! You'll strangle him! . . . Mother, why do you torment me? Can't you take pity on me? No? Mashki, put down the baby. Put him down, put him down! . . .

DINA. Don't listen to her, Mashki.

SONYA. She's strangling him. I can't stand it. Mother, mother! . . .

MASHKI. I'm not strangling him and nothing will happen to him. Mashki doesn't get blood on her hands if she can help it. (*Puts down the child and re-wraps him.*) How many children has Mashki handled! You could never count them, girl. (*Takes the baby in her arms.*) There, he's breathing. And why should you want it to breathe? What would he grow up to be? Have you had an easy life? And will his be any easier?

SONYA (*terrified*). Do you hear what she says? She'll

kill him. Mashki, I won't; no! Give him back to me! . . . What are you two doing to me! (*Struggles with* Dina.) No, no! . . .

Mashki (*becoming angry*). My dear, it's really impossible. Mashki is used to doing business with reliable people. Mashki is at home in the richest homes as well as the poorest, and everybody minds her! But you're shouting. The whole neighborhood will turn out to see what's wrong. Take him back. . . . "No, no, no! I won't!"

Dina (*quickly covering* Sonya's *mouth with her hand*). Will you stop shouting, damn you? . . . Or do you want me to strangle you?

Sonya (*half choked*). I won't say anything. I'll be quiet. . . .

Dina. Look here, Mashki. I'm giving you the child, but you mustn't kill it. . . . You mustn't kill it, remember.

Mashki (*laughing*). Now everything's all right. You've got to treat 'em that way. And how she is going to laugh to herself by and by! A virgin again, and do as you please. Why, that's why Mashki's in the world. . . . (*Laughs.*)

Sonya (*with a sudden outburst*). If you only knew, Mashki! . . .

Mashki. I know everything. What is it I don't know? Yes, yes, yes. You're going to be good now, and never, never look at a man again. I know, I know. They all say the same thing. But don't you worry about him, girl. Mashki tells you: Your boy is going to live. You think I'm going to kill him, smash his head on the rocks? No, no, no! I'll find a really good place, and leave him in the right spot. — Where's my money?

Sonya (*leaping to her side*). Mashki! Here, I'm pleading with you, Mashki! Who are now my father and my mother? You! I beg you. . . . A mother begs you. Darling, take pity on him. Take pity on my baby! (*Throws herself on him.*) Why, this was all my wealth, all my truth, all my purity. . . . Darling, my heart is breaking. And do you know what the soul feels when the heart breaks? Oh, Mashki! I don't know you, but I want to weep on your breast. A mother begs you, a mother. . . .

Mashki. Well, that's enough, girl. Why should you

wear yourself out like this? You'll have another one. Mashki tells you — you'll have another one.

SONYA. Put him where it's dry, where it's warm. . . . Ask where kind people live. . . . Ask! Put him at their door. Perhaps they'll take pity. Yes? Say you will! I want to believe you. Will they take pity on him? Yes? Will they bring him up? Say yes! Lay my baby down carefully and tell him that his mother is begging him to forgive her. Begging, begging . . .

DINA (*turning her face away*). Go sit down, Sonya. That's enough. Mashki, take him away. My heart's not made out of iron or stone, but my lips can't say blessings all the time. Here's your money. (*Gives her the money.*)

SONYA (*leaps to* DINA, *extending her hands to her*). Mother . . . Perhaps? Ah, mother? Think before it's too late. . . .

DINA. Go on, Mashki. . . . Hurry! (SONYA *falls on the chair.*)

MASHKI (*putting away the money*). I'm on my way. Running. Do you hear? Everywhere they shout, "Mashki, Mashki, Mashki!" (*Laughs.*) Well, Mashki's here! Mashki's here! . . . (*Goes out quickly.*)

DINA. Thank God! Sonya, open the shutters. You've cried enough. Now we'll start to live again.

SONYA. I'll never stop crying. . . .

DINA (*with assurance*). You will. What are you now? A virgin! . . . And a virgin walks along and looks at everybody proudly. . . . Stop crying. We'll bring the old days back. We'll rent other quarters, clean and nice. And we'll have a good laugh at everybody.

SONYA. I feel lost! How lonesome the room is without him! (*Weeps.*) What have I to live for if he's not with me? . . .

DINA. You'll forget, Sonya. One forgets everything. And once more you'll be bringing home gold, as you used to. I have forgotten Eva, you'll forget your child; but one thing we'll have left: life, life itself! You'll see, you'll see! We'll hold our heads up again. . . . I'll buy father a good suit, a hat and cane, so that everybody'll say: "He's slick as silk". . . . And I won't shout any more! . . . Why are you crying? What is there to cry about? Look at me. Why, I could run and

dance in the streets. Now, now, that's enough! (*Turns to the door and calls with self-assurance.*) Glank! Glank! Come here! We're beginning all over! Glank! Glank!

CURTAIN.

TRANSLATORS' NOTE

In the City appeared in 1906 in the *Miscellany* of the *Znaniye* ("Knowledge") Publishing House, a firm that issued the works of Maxim Gorky and numbered him among its shareholders; the drama was produced in the same year at Kommissarzhevskaya's new theater under the direction of Meyerhold. The author, Semen Yushkevich (1869-1927), a Jew born in Odessa, had already gained a reputation by stories dealing with the life of the Jewish proletariat as he had come to know it in his native city. Yushkevich resembles Gorky and some other writers of the *Znaniye* group by his combination of sordid realism with an ardent aspiration for higher things; or, to speak more concretely, with revolutionary sympathies for the submerged classes. *In the City* is typical of his work, which, both in the narrative and in the dramatic form, portrays small merchants, petty craftsmen, working women, pedlars, thieves, and prostitutes: the setting is always Jewish. Despite his radical political opinions Yushkevich did not join the Bolshevik party, but in 1920 left Russia. His later years he spent largely in Paris, where he had studied in earlier days. Although he lived on intimate terms with some of the best Russian men of letters, such as Bunin and Zaytsev, during these years of voluntary exile he wrote nothing of importance.

SONG OF THE WILL-O-THE-WISP

By Norma Way

In the dark of the fen
Faintly I gleam
And vanish again
With the speed of a dream.
You cannot see me
Nor follow my track,
You cannot flee me
Nor yet hold back —
For the spell I hold is the spell of gold
That lures men into the northland cold . . .
I am Spirit, you cannot follow
A flight that is swifter than any swallow!

Some think me woman
And others child.
I am not human,
I am not wild.
I shine like a star,
I twinkle and glance
First near, then far,
In a maddening dance!
For the spell that is mine is the spell of wine
Of the purple grape on the tendrilled vine —
Of the sparkling drink that is ruby-clear
Like mingled nectar and salty tear.

Oh, leave your sorrow
And leave your care,
And follow the light
Of my burnished hair!
I call the young
And I call the old,
And caution is flung
With abandon bold —
For the spell I cast will hold you fast
Till all eternity is passed.
Your body will die on the rocks below
But your soul its bondage cannot forego!

In the dark of the fen
Faintly I gleam
And vanish again
With the speed of a dream.
You cannot see me
Nor follow my track,
You cannot flee me
Nor yet hold back —
From the spell I weave there is no reprieve
But to submit and to serve and grieve.
I am Spirit, you cannot follow
A flight that is swifter than any swallow!

LEGEND FROM THE ARABIC

By Celia Keegan

Far off, within the desert, vast, unspaced,
There rears in splendid majesty, alone,
A towering pyramid of glossy stone,
And here, across the rolling, sandy waste
A lonely bird flies once each century
To pause beside the huge and stony hill
And delicately rub his fragile bill
Against the mountain's solid density.

He flies away and never more appears
Until the passing of a hundred years.
Thus, when that granite hill no more shall stand
In rigid dignity above the sand
But has been worn away — then that will be
One second's passing, of eternity.

HAWAIIAN PANTHEON

By Beatrice Ayer Patton

If we could learn the whole history of the gods of the Hawaiian Islands, we should find unrolled before our eyes the complete story of the journeyings of the Polynesian race. These people have been travellers for so long that their beginnings are lost in the Twilight of Antiquity; yet their gods plainly show the paths that they have travelled, and which even the Hawaiians themselves have forgotten. Their own chants tell us that they came from *Kahiki,* Beyond the Portals of the Sky; nosing out of the mists of time in their great double canoes to plough the first furrows in the salt wastes of the Pacific. The Hawaiian word, *Kahiki,* means venerable, reverend or foreign, and some early translators believed it to be a legendary country; but we know now that it is Tahiti and that the Polynesians had been on the march for centuries before they reached there, for neither in Tahiti nor Hawaii is there to be found any lizard longer than a man's little finger; and the Hawaiian half-god, the dragon-lizard, *Moo,* is a racial memory of Java, the terror of which lingers with them still.

No one knows with what gods the Polynesians began their wanderings, but it is certain that they added new members to their god family from time to time, while never really giving up the old ones; for though a once fashionable god may become demoded, and even overthrown, he is never really lost sight of. He simply sinks below the surface of everyday life into the underlying web of mysticism that is the warp of Polynesian thought.

There are certain gods common to all Polynesia and the oldest are represented by an amulet, an odd shaped stone, or even a leaf braided in intricate pattern, but the oldest of all has no earthly symbol. He is the Life-Taker, Whom none dare name. Sometimes, in Hawaiian place-names associated with danger or with extreme beauty, one sees the word *Mea:* Someone. Someone's waterfall; Someone's beach; Undertow of the Unnameable.

During the period from the ninth to the eleventh century all Polynesia seems to have been on the move. The trackless

ocean wastes became known lanes of travel, and winds and currents were studied and the knowledge of them circulated orally among the navigators. Planets and stars were recognized, and so exact became the knowledge of these seafarers that they even knew of one location, entirely out of sight of any land, where they could replenish their store of fresh water from a hidden spring in the open sea. This was done by deep diving with an overturned watergourd until the diver reached the fresh water where he up-ended the gourd, let out the air bubble and the fresh water rushed in to take its place. Then he rose to the top with his gourd filled.

The chants of that time are full of descriptions of long voyages, and there is one complete account of a voyage from Tahiti to Hawaii and back again. The hero was an astute chief who, after braving the storms and calms for many weeks, made his landfall on the Island of Oahu only to find himself off a Tabu land where he knew the guards would kill him if he tried to go ashore. He and his people were perishing of thirst. What to do? To this great sailor's mind the solution was simple. Stationing himself at the prow of his canoe he beat on a sacred drum he had brought with him, and the fishermen, seeing the strange vessel and hearing the peremptory summons, tumbled their bananas and hogs into their canoes and hurried out to pay tribute to the stranger who dared strike his drum so near the Tabu beach. He must be a god, they reasoned. Perhaps if they pacified him, he would go away. The chief's chant enumerates the presents he received, and recites gleefully how his canoe was loaded to the gunwales by the people of the Tabu beach before he proceeded to his destination.

These pioneers were expert colonizers, and not only took with them their gods, plants, tools, weapons and animals, but each of the chiefs among them carried his own Polynesian Family Bible, the oral genealogy which linked him to his forefathers in the land he had left behind, and sometimes even claimed kinship with the gods.

Pele, goddess of volcanoes, belongs to this period of great migrations. She was a Samoan, daughter of the Chief-who-Dreamed-of-Trouble, who, when robbed of her lands, set sail with her followers for Hawaii, and established a colony there. She and her people were blotted out by an eruption,

and later she was deified. Due to the persistent activity of volcanoes in the Hawaiian islands, *Pele* is the best known of the Hawaiian gods today, but she is in reality one of the lesser ones. The greatest are *Ku, Kane, Kanaloa* and *Lono*. *Ku* is the earth god, god of carpenters and canoe builders. *Kane,* Lord and Giver of Life, is god of the morning, whose bright path is the dawn.

A HYMN TO KANE

O *Kane,* O *Kuka Poo,*
With great *Lono* dwelling in the water,
Brought forth are heaven and earth,
Quickened, increased, moving,
Raised up into continents.
The great ocean of *Kane,*
The ocean of the dotted seas,
The ocean of the large fishes,
The sharks and *Niuhi,*
The whales and the large *Hihimanu* of *Kane.*
The rows of stars of *Kane,*
The stars in the firmament,
The stars that have been fastened up,
Fast, fast on the surface of the heaven of *Kane.*
The wandering stars, the sacred stars of *Kane.*
The moving stars of *Kane.*
Innumerable are the stars,
The large stars, the small stars,
The red stars of *Kane,* O Infinite Space.
The great moon of *Kane,*
The great sun of *Kane,*
Moving, floating, set moving about in the great space of *Kane.*
The great earth of *Kane,*
The rain-encircled earth of *Kane*
The earth that *Kane* set in motion.
Moving are the stars, moving is the moon,
Moving is the great earth of *Kane.*

This chant, glorifying the motion of the planets, the earth and the sun and moon, may have been composed as

early as the ninth century. Compare this with the European knowledge of that time.

The god, *Kanaloa,* was a joker, full of naughty Polynesian fun and boon companion of the more serious *Kane.*

The god, *Lono,* was a man and a stranger to Polynesia. He was deeply loved by the Hawaiians and took a native chieftess to wife, but he made her life wretched by his jealousy and in one of his rages he finally strangled her. Half mad with remorse, he travelled from island to island, challenging all comers to box with him, hoping thereby to meet his death; but *Lono* could not die. At last he built a boat of a triangular form unknown in the islands, and launched it in the path of the setting sun. "Do not grieve for me, my children," he said to the wailing people, "I go from you only for a while. Some day I will return." Was he a shipwrecked sailor, tired enough of life to risk it to reach another land? Nobody knows.

Haumea is the Hawaiian Earth Mother, and in the cave of *Hina,* goddess of the moon, the gods rest when they are tired. It is there that *Laka,* lovely goddess of the Hula, sometimes dances for their entertainment; and once every thousand years she goes to earth to be loved by a mortal.

A LEGEND OF LAKA

In the cave of *Hina,* the gods, sitting ranged in rows according to their rank, were terribly bored. They were all there, from *Ku* clear down to the smallest fish god, and so terribly bored were they that their heads were sunk on their breasts, as if they were asleep. Only sometimes would the young goddess *Laka* dance to cheer them and then they would look up and enjoy themselves for a little while.

One day *Laka* said to the gods, "I will dance for you no longer. I must go to earth and sit at the feet of one who will draw his fingers through my hair like a comb."

When *Laka* danced no more, the gods' heads sunk lower and lower on their breasts until they grew that way; all but that of the war god, *Kukailimoku,* who was in love with her. He propped up his head and looked at the clouds, so that ever afterward it grew in a funny way, like that of a hunchback; and besides *Kukailimoku* has the skin of a shark, which is so

rough that it cannot grow together. The gods begged her to pity their plight without her, but *Laka* would not stay.

* * *

The young king, *Lono,* was a marvel at sport; in hunting, fishing, and boxing no man excelled him, but he would have nothing to do with women, though they pursued him in every way and in every guise. At last a girl who had so tattooed and otherwise disfigured herself that *Lono* believed her to be a boy, became his spear bearer. Her name was *Uiana,* "One who is to become beautiful."

One day at the games, while *Lono* was throwing the spear, something cracked at the back of his head. He lay on the ground not moving, quite still, with his eyes wide open; and whenever anyone closed them, as soon as he let go, they flew open again. Nothing could be done. They called all the priests together to pray to *Kane,* Lord and Giver of Life, to cure their king, and all prayed but one old man with a long white beard. "Why do you not pray?" they asked, but he only shook his head.

They asked again the second time and he answered, "Do you wish to know?"

"Certainly," cried all the priests in chorus.

"I will tell you, then," said the old white-bearded one. "He has seen *Laka.* Once every thousand years she comes to earth and he has seen her and his eyes are open. Build an altar to *Laka.*"

The altar was built and all waited, but one by one they fell into a deep sleep; priests, courtiers, dancers to *Laka,* all, all slept. *Uiana,* the spear-maiden, propped her chin on *Lono's* spear so as to keep awake, but at last she too slept and the point of the spear went through her neck.

Then, as they slept their enchanted sleep, *Laka* came onto the altar, lovely as the starlight. The king's eyes were open and he saw her, the most beautiful woman in the world. She stood among her flowers, the *Lehua* and the *Ieie,* on the altar.

He rose and strode toward her crying, "You are mine!" His feet were wet with the blood of the Spear-maiden but he did not even look down to see whence it came. All was forgotten as he saw this most beautiful woman.

She raised her hand in the sign of the cliff: impassable. "You cannot be mine unless you equal the gods."

"But I am a mortal."

"Then you must do a godlike thing. Bring me the queen of the fish, *Anaeholo.* Climb yonder cliff, *Maunawili,* and run down the ridge called *Onaona* to the sea at *Waikiki.* There the enemy will attack you and the air will be black with spears; so shout your name and rank and then catch me, with your two bare hands, *Anaeholo.* If you do this I will wait for you and we will lie in a hut together with precious calabashes and scented sleeping mats fit for the gods themselves."

Lono gave a great cry and ran toward the altar but the goddess had vanished.

The sleepers woke to see the altar empty and their king running down the hill as though the gnomes were after him.

When the enemy, inhabiting *Waikiki,* heard *Lono* shout his name and rank, the air was black with spears. Miraculously he dodged them all and, still shouting his name, plunged into the water. So great was his desire to fulfil the test that, before the enemy could get out their war canoes to chase him, he had caught the Fish Queen in his two bare hands. Now the *Anaeholo* fish is only the length of a hand, but their queen is three times that length and hard to catch.

Lono came leaping out of the sea with his prize in his two bare hands, to take it to his beloved; but the jealous god, *Kukailimoku,* was watching him from the skies. Taking his shark shape, he changed the Queen of the *Anaeholo* into a little shark. It bit *Lono* in the back, but he did not feel it, so great was his haste to reach his beloved. Again the air was dark with hurtling spears, but, as he reached the summit of *Ualakaa,* he felt a growing weight upon his back and his tender skin began to bleed as from the rubbing of a file. He did not know, nor did he stop to find out, that the Queen of the *Anaeholo* had become a shark and was growing larger every minute. It weighed ten pounds — fifty pounds — a hundred pounds, but *Lono* toiled on. With frantic exertion he reached *Kaakea,* which the *Haole* poets have called Sugar Loaf.

At the top of Tantalus he saw a new hut, shining and fresh. It was the hut *Laka* had built for him: a *Lanai* and hut of *Ti* leaves strung on the tendrils of the moon flower.

The mats were still green, being fresh from the tree, and the dancers were shaking the leaves of the Koa trees with the rhythm of their drums. On he labored, and now the shark weighed five hundred pounds.

At the foot of *Onaona* he heard the voice of *Laka* singing, "*Kalia Au Ia Oe,* I am waiting for you." Within the hut stood his beloved, her naked body shining with coconut oil and wreathed with her own flower, *Ieie.* She stretched out her arms to him. "*Mai,* come," she cried. With a last effort *Lono* reached the threshold and dropped at her feet, and the crimson tide of life gushed from his mouth.

Kukailimoku laughed from the clouds. "You have asked of a man to be a god," he taunted.

Laka turned white with fury. "I have been cheated of my lover, Sister *Pele,* shall I have my revenge on this — *Shark?*"

Instantly, the sky blackened, and the air grew thick with smoke. *Leahi* became a mass of flames and *Puuloa* vomited fire fountains that reached to the very arch of the sky. A sheet .of flame swept across the mountain and enveloped *Lono,* his hideous burden, and the hut, and *Laka.* "Be one at last," hissed the fire.

When the flames died down, the green forest was gone. Blackened stumps and the grey grass that crumbles underfoot were all that were left; and on the ridge of *Onaona* lay a great block of stone. *Laka* and her lover were one at last, fused forever together by the mighty Goddess of Fire, who loves but to destroy.

To this day, those who wish to join themselves for life, clasp their hands over the rock with the thumbs touching, and if their love is true they will feel the beating hearts of *Laka* and *Lono* sealed within the stone.

* * *

Other gods of this period, to find favor with the Hawaiians, were two round white stones of great weight and girth and pierced through the middle. It is not known what they represented and no one has ever troubled to seek out their hiding place, but *Paao,* the priest who brought them from Samoa to Hawaii, was a peace-loving, noble character and the Hawaiians honored his gods because of him. He was the brother of a high chief of Samoa who delighted in per-

secuting him, and who, at the end of a long series of minor persecutions, accused *Paao* of inciting his son to steal the chief's fruit. Stung beyond endurance at his brother's meanness, Paao offered to cut the child open and prove his innocence. The brother challenged him to make good his offer, which *Paao* did. No one knows what gods he prayed to then, and he may have felt that the boy's innocence would save him, but the child died and the broken hearted father brooded on revenge, until at last he murdered his brother's son and for his crime was banished forever from Samoa. Loading his gods and thirty-eight of his followers into a great war canoe, he set out to find a new home in the Hawaiian islands, 2400 miles to the northward. *Paao* must have learned wisdom through his sufferings, for he became a great man in Hawaii. One of the two temples he built for his gods is the largest temple in the archipelago, and his days ended in honor and peace in the land of his adoption.

After the eleventh century, the great migrations ceased and the Hawaiians became more isolated. All sorts of minor gods developed, and every trade and every locality had its favorite. Fishermen prayed to *Kuula,* who had power to draw the fish into the folds of the sea so that the nets could not catch them. Pregnant women prayed to *Hilu* to lighten their pains, and chiefs and priests prayed to be delivered from the poison god, *Kalaipahoa.* Carved from a legendary poison tree growing in the center of the island of Molokai, *Kalaipaoha* was so poisonous that a single scraping the size of a fingernail, hidden in the food, caused death. He is one of the few idols left to us, for such was his reputation that the priests were afraid to destroy him in their general idol burning of 1819, and today he glares at us behind the glass of a case in the Bishop Museum, a captive under lock and key.

The Hawaiian islands were divided into small kingdoms, often at war with one another. The younger brothers of the rulers usually went into the priesthood, which was divided into classes and comprised, besides actual temple priests, prophets, augurs, medical and surgical doctors, masseurs, interpreters of the law, and wizards, who, for a consideration, could be hired to pray one's enemy to death. As the temple rituals and the ceremonies surrounding the chiefs grew more

and more elaborate, the system of tabus they imposed became virtual slavery, even to the chiefs themselves. The Hawaiians lived in fear, no less of the goddess *Pele,* surfing down the mountainside on a wave of curling lava, than of the *Mu,* the sacrifice priest, who when a victim was required for the altar, sneaked up behind the chosen one and clubbed him on the head. "Hush, child, the *Mu* will get you," is a threat still in the mouths of Hawaiian mothers today.

This was the state of things when Captain James Cook discovered the Islands in 1778. He first landed at the northern most island, Kauai, and the following year he went south to Hawaii, where for seven weeks he lay off and on looking for a suitable harbor in which to clean and refit his ships for their real goal — the discovery of the Northwest Passage. The natives who swam out to the vessels or circled them in their canoes, gave disturbing reports of what they saw. "On two floating islands covered with trees with bare branches live men whose heads are three cornered and who blow fire and smoke through their nostrils; men whose faces are red but whose skin is of many colors on other parts of the body, and so loose that they hide all manner of things within their legs, and who chatter in a strange tongue to a chief who makes the stars fly at his pleasure." (Cook was in the habit of displaying rockets to impress savages.) No Hawaiian had ever seen the like of the ships, the men, nor the ship's boats. Then someone recalled the chant of *Lono* and his boat of triangular form unknown in the Eight Islands. Was not the gig, towing at the Discovery's stern, of that same triangular form? The god had kept his promise! *Lono* had come back to his children!

When Cook landed he was met on the beach by a galaxy of chiefs and priests and dressed in the red tapa of the god. Hogs were sacrificed to him in the temple and he was given the sanctuary for his own. He revictualled his ships with the offerings and set up an observatory in the sanctuary. His sailors tore down the temple fence for firewood and slaughtered the gift hogs in the sacred enclosure; but the Hawaiians did not complain. The temple belonged to the god: surely *Lono* could do as he would with his own? To Cook, the fence was no doubt a chain of interlocking stumps set on edge and the temple floor a mere lava shelf paved with beach pebbles.

Yet, with all his knowledge of primitive peoples, one wonders if he ever realized that the Hawaiians believed him to be a god.

At last the ships were cleaned and provisioned, and Cook called the chiefs and priests together and thanked them for his entertainment. They answered him with silence, for the burden that *Lono* had put upon them was a heavy one, and the patience of the natives was wearing thin. Due to the unprecedented levy on their food supplies, the people were facing famine, and, besides that, strange illnesses were beginning to crop out among those who trafficked with the ships. Men who had never been ill before coughed and spat blood; and sores broke out in the womens' mouths and would not heal. The visit of the god had been a disappointment.

Cook must have felt that he had worn out his welcome, for he assured the chiefs that he would not return; but on the second day out his mast sprung and he turned back. The chiefs met him glumly, but all would have still been well had not some natives stolen one of the British boats. This was serious, and Cook went ashore determined to take the high chief on board as a hostage until the boat was restored. He had tabued the harbor to all vessels but his own, and an overeager officer on the Discovery saw a native canoe in the water and fired at it. The canoe belonged to a chief from another village who knew nothing of the Tabu, and when he fell dead, killed by the shots from the Discovery, his men paddled ashore and laid his body on the beach. "Lo," they marvelled, "our chief is dead and his body is torn wide open although no human hand has touched him."

Cook must have sensed that trouble was upon him, for he tried to get into his boat, but a Hawaiian seized him by the arm. Infuriated by this familiarity, Cook let fly with one barrel of his gun and the man dropped. A second native struck him with a javelin from behind and he fell to his knees groaning. This was not god! Gods do not groan nor do they bleed, as Cook was bleeding now. In an instant he was overpowered. A battle followed. The men on the ships dared not take part in it for fear of killing their own people, but the marines who had gone ashore with Cook loaded and reloaded while warriers with spears and stone adzes clubbed them down. One giant chief, the center of it all,

stood up and heaved javelins at the ships while his men held a mat in front of him and poured water on it to quench the invisible fires from the guns. When the fight was over, Cook and four marines were dead and the British vessels put out to sea. The chiefs parted Cook's bones among themselves according to custom, and his hands, emblems of strength and power, were salted and hung up in a cave.

Cook blazed the way for other navigators who took what they wanted from the islands and left in return the seeds of death and growing doubts in the minds of the islanders. These strangers worshipped no idols, obeyed no Tabus, and broke the Hawaiian Tabus with impunity. Vainly the priests tried to stem the spreading tide of revolt, but at last, at the death of *Kamehameha* the Great, in 1819, two of his wives publicly broke a Tabu, the penalty for which was death. Because of the rank of the culprits the frightened priests dared not enforce the punishment, and the new freedom spread through the islands like a grass fire. What good were gods who would allow their Tabus broken? There was a great battle in which the conservatives, ranged on the side of the old gods, were beaten. The idols were burned and their priests driven into hiding; and the Hawaiian Islands were scenes of orgy for one whole year.

Only one cult did not suffer in the general destruction. That was the cult of *Io,* god of light, who has no idols. There was nothing to burn in that lonely temple in the valley of *Honokane.*

This was in 1819. In 1820 the missionaries came from the Park Street church of Boston — a company of eight married couples with a farmer and two Hawaiian interpreters to help them bring light to the dark-hearted heathen. The company had been formed in response to the prayer of a Hawaiian boy who had been found one morning on the steps of Yale College by the janitor. He was a cabin boy from some ship that had touched at Hawaii, and had become a Christian; and he begged that missionaries be sent to christianize his people and rid them of their idols. He died of consumption before the missionaries sailed, but the enthusiasm he had kindled was far reaching.

After 160 days at sea they anchored off *Kailua,* on the island of Hawaii, not far from the spot where Captain Cook

had been killed forty-one years before. They sent a request to the young king to be allowed to land and tell the Hawaiian people about God.

His answer was polite but definite. "We have rid ourselves of our gods. We have destroyed our idols and we do not want any new ones."

The King's uncle, who had been high priest in the old regime, came forward. He had carried the shark-toothed war god beside his brother, *Kamehameha* the Great, in battle, and had seen the islands conquered and prosperous under the Conqueror's rule; and he had lived through *Kamehameha's* death and the holocaust that followed it. "My people are without a law," he said.

The missionary answered, "My God *IS* the Law."

An old Englishman, so long in the islands that he might almost have been taken for a native, spoke then. He was John Young, the boatswain whom *Kamehameha* had kidnapped from a British ship and had made his chief adviser; and he had been afraid in the year just past. "This man's god is my God, to Whom I pray. It is good for the people of Hawaii to have His law."

The young king waved his hand. "Very well, then, let these people land and we will learn about their god here in Hawaii."

It is recorded that the missionaries sang at their first service there; and I like to believe that some old sweet hymn tune clinched the final decision of the king and queens to let them stay; for music was only latent in the Hawaiians until the missionaries came, and the hymns became such a part of their lives that their songs, even today, are reminiscent of church music. But of that little company of teachers the men had to become doctors and the women nurses in order to save the bodies of the Hawaiians from the diseases of civilization so that their souls might win eternal life.

So the people of the Eight Islands accepted Jehovah and Jesus, his Son; and now, when they say their prayers, they murmur the *Our Father* together with the older supplications to *Ku,* and *Hina,* and to the Life-Taker whom none dare name.

POEMS

A SUCCESSFUL LIFE

By Helene Mullins

The risk is over now, the risk is over,
And triumph sets its wreath forevermore
Upon the wounded man, the daring rover
Never so near to paradise before.

The sun's new radiance heals his weary eyes,
The earth's new verdure soothes his aching feet.
He knows enough of living to be wise,
Knows joy's abundant bloom and sorrow's sleet.

Let fall the twigs now, he has built his nest,
With fears that bled him gathered grass and clover
To hold contentedly against his breast.
The risk is over now, the risk is over.

OLD MAN

By Curt Storm

We say he's cold
and never smiles or says
a friendly word or mingles
with his neighbors much,
just lives alone there
in the old house, without
even a cat for company.

But have you ever thought
that maybe he has company enough
in the big place? Perhaps
he has the past entrapped
within those walls, to fill
an empty life.

Perhaps he's never loved.

TWO POEMS

By Hannah Kahn

BETRAYAL

There was something I wanted to tell you, Sam —

I heard you crying yesterday
When the minister was praying
and I wanted to explain to you about the thirty pieces of
silver
But there was a fog between us
and I could not reach you.

Just before I died, I told them to call you
and you came and held my hand
and I thought there was yet time for explanation
and time for living . . .

Seems strange that this should happen to me.
I knew other people died
but if I was going to die, why did I live?

Wait for me, Sam.
everything is confused in the darkness
and there are many pools of tears
and many deep shadows.

Tonight I am forging my way through a cloud
for I must come to you
with thirty stars of the sky
to cancel thirty pieces of silver.

PLEA

Born of a dark race,
I learned to eat
fruit that was bitter
along with the sweet,

and hated the bitter
for all it implied —
the stranger who knocks
and waits outside

for a door to be opened
that was closed too long
against a people
whose only wrong

was a darker color
and a child-like need
for understanding
of a different creed.

POEMS

By Lucy A. K. Adee

CONTRAST

Shriek of fire engine,
Whirring drone of plane,
Brakes jarring, rasping,
Rush and roar of train —
Underground, overhead,
Tension, hurry, strain.

Yet —
Somewhere, somewhere
There are lilacs growing —
Crickets chirping, chirping
On hillsides green and still
Piping of little frogs,
Clear brooks flowing —
At twilight the quiet call
Of a whippoorwill.

THE TRYST

Very quietly, very still,
The mist comes creeping
Over the hill —
Smoothes my forehead,
Touches my cheeks,
Kisses me tenderly —
But never speaks.

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